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OSRICK.

A ROMANCE.

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OSRICK;

OR,

Modern Horrors.

A ROMANCE.

INTERSPERSED WITH A FEW

ANECDOTES, &c.

THAT HAVE THEIR FOUNDATION IN TRUTH, AND WHICH ARE OCCASIONALLY POINTED OUT TO THE READER.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY

RICHARD SICKELMORE,

AUTHOR OF

MARY-JANE; RAYMOND; AGNES AND [illegible]ORA; EDGAR; RASHLEIGH ABBEY; &c. &c.

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OSRICK.

OSRICK, recovering from the first disagreeable effects of his surprise, to escape, if possible, by

A PRUDENT RETREAT,

was his first wish, in his new dilemma; for, to attempt to retaliate upon his concealed enemy or enemies, had he been free from fatigue, and well armed, would have been the height of imprudence, and promised to end only in his own destruc-

tion; and much less could such a proceeding be justified in his enfeebled state, and a sabre the only weapon left that he could have recourse to, either for offensive or defensive purposes; and in neither, had he been put to the trial, could he have used it with his natural vigour or usual skill, whatever his intrepidity might have prompted him to attempt.

Almost entirely losing the smarts of his wounds, and the stiffness of his limbs, in the anxiety of the moment, he now, with a rapidity he had scarcely hoped to command, renewed his route for Monte Video, frequently looking back, and, to his great relief, perceiving that he was not pursued.

That his treacherous guide had been the cause of the last attempt that had been made to destroy him, he felt fully convinced. Some of the Pampas, he supposed, had been aroused from their secret retreats, as, doubtlessly, they had many of them, by him; though, among those

those he had previously seen, he had beheld no fire-arms; yet to conclude from that circumstance that they had none, would have been absurd.

Breathless nearly with his journey, and the uncommon efforts he had made to perform the latter part of it, he at length reached the entrance of the town, about nine o'clock in the morning, when the first object he saw was his friend Dreadnought, who, apprehending that something very extraordinary must have occasioned his long absence, with

A FRIENDLY SOLICITUDE

had determined to go in quest of him, particularly as the military orders last issued had rendered his and every individual's presence belonging to the army absolutely indispensable.

Osrick saw the Captain with visible satisfaction; but not of quite such a grateful description were the feelings which

his bloody and haggard appearance excited in Dreadnought.

"Why, Somerton!" he exclaimed, "what in the name of wonder have you been doing with yourself?—You have not been in your quarters all night—and you look as if you had been waging unequal war with the natives, who have favoured you with a few scratches, as remembrancers of their respect for your valour!—Zounds, man! 'twas churlish of you to take all the diversion by yourself, while I was absolutely dying of *ennui*, occasioned by the want of employment. I began, however, at last, to be uneasy at your absence, particularly at this crisis, and therefore mounted the first charger I could procure, to look for you."

Osrick smiled at his volubility, and thanked him for the friendly concern he had shewn for him; and was not a little gratified in beholding him in such spirits, it being so different to what he had observed in him for many days before.

"But

"But what was it you meant, Captain," enquired Osrick, "when you did me the honour to observe, that you were uneasy at my absence *at this crisis?*"

"Why orders," said he, "have been issued for the immediate embarkation of the forces, and some, even of our own regiment, are already on shipboard; and therefore I thought it a period so critical, that every officer should be found at his post, particularly one for whom I have so much esteem as yourself."

"Our esteem is mutual," replied Osrick, "and I rejoice in your friendship; but I am sorry, notwithstanding, at the intelligence you have given me."

"Sorry!" said Dreadnought, with surprise; "by my sword, it has given me spirits—and it will cheer your's, my boy, by and by, for some brisk work is expected, I assure you."

"I would almost sacrifice my life," energetically observed Osrick, "to postpone the removal but for twelve hours!"

"That's impossible, however," said the other; "and if it could be postponed, it wouldn't be the sacrifice of your life that would purchase it, if you had nothing better to offer. The service would be much benefited truly, if every individual was to be allowed to dispose of that which did not belong to him, as he might think proper. Your life is your country's, and your King has given you an opportunity, if it must be sacrificed, of doing it gloriously in your country's cause, and in which, should Fate so will it, I will also joyously sacrifice my own."

"Neither my King nor my country," said Osrick, "shall ever find me voluntarily deficient in my duties to either—but my dearest hopes are defeated in this sudden embarkation of the troops."

"*HOPES DEFEATED!*"

echoed Dreadnought; "why, man, you are too unintelligible to be understood."

"Your

"Your surprise will cease," said Osrick, "when you have heard my adventures of the night; and which, after I have given nature a little necessary support by some kind of refreshment, for I've fasted since I saw you last, I'll relate to you."

"Your entertainers then, it appears," said Dreadnought, "have not been of the most hospitable complexion, and they seem also to have sent you back in want of a surgeon as well as a breakfast!"

"I believe," said Osrick, "I shall be enabled to do without the one, if I can but speedily command the other."

"It must be speedily," said the Captain, "if you take it at all, for I assure you that you will have no time to spare."

The Captain now offered Osrick his horse, but which, as the distance he now had to walk before he reached his quarters was trifling, he declined accepting.

During the time that Osrick was putting himself to rights, by taking refresh-

ments, shifting his clothes, and washing off the blood that had incrusted about him, Dreadnought went in quest of the surgeon of the regiment; but his returning with him, however, only proved the accuracy of Osrick's former words, that some restorative for the stomach was all he wanted. The bite he had received in the leg was the worst wound that had been inflicted on him, and that promised not to trouble him beyond a day or two.

The surgeon having withdrawn, Dreadnought questioned his friend as to what had occurred to keep him abroad all night, and which he had promised to relate when he was in a condition to do so? and, therefore, Osrick, without hesitation, complied with his request.

Dreadnought listened attentively, and, occasionally, with horror and amazement; but the melancholy fate of the hapless Clara interested him the most.

"Figure to yourself," said Osrick, in speaking of her, "one of the most love-

ly creatures that nature ever formed, and so resembling in face and person, for the likeness struck me the moment I saw her, one of the best and most virtuous of her sex, and whom you, I believe, have seen but once, and that not in a situation to decide very accurately of her beauty."

"To whom do you allude?" enquired Dreadnought.

"To Alethea Castleby," replied the other.

The Captain started at the name, and a tinge of red somewhat deeper than what generally inhabited there, marked his veteranly brow.

"Can it be possible?" he, at length, confusedly exclaimed.

"What?" said Osrick.

"That she is so very beautiful!"

"Of the two, an artist might give the palm of loveliness in her favour; but in my eyes, the charms of Alethea are not to be excelled. I have the picture of the latter about me—it is my heart's dearest

companion—and rather than lose it, I'd part with life!"

"Don't shew it to me—I am not fond of pictures—conceal it, I entreat you!"

Osrick had taken the miniature from his bosom, but the earnest manner of Dreadnought induced him to return it.

"It has the features of a divinity," remarked Osrick, "and such as might kindle the fire of love in the icy heart of an anchorite, but to gaze on."

"Then why will you suffer any person to look at it but yourself?—It may kindle a desire in the beholder to cut your throat, to possess himself of the original!"

"But not in a friend!—and I would shew it to none else."

"And you had better not to a friend, for it may make a friend unhappy."

"Indeed!" said Osrick, noticing him with more than common attention, and, for the first time, suspecting that the only sight he had ever obtained of Alethea

thea had given birth to a hopeless passion in his breast, and which promised to be fatal to his peace.

"If Clara is such as you have stated her to be," now exclaimed Dreadnought, "I would have died rather than have deserted her!"

"And would that have been rendering her any service?"

"I am a fool!—No!"

"I thank Heaven that I had the good fortune to escape as I did, for I now live in the exulting hope of being enabled most essentially to serve her, in effecting her rescue also."

"But this sudden embarkation——"

"Aye, there it is—I told you it had defeated my purpose, and made me miserable!—What can be done?"

"At present, nothing—and hark! by the beat of the drums without, we are summoned——"

"Poor Clara!"

"Should we live to return, she shall command our first attention; therefore, cheer your spirits—it is folly to despond—and what can excite suspicions more degrading, than a soldier, on the eve of actual service, with a melancholy brow. Are you ready?"

"This instant I accompany you."

"By the bye, I forgot to tell you that Imbecile is on the sick-list—he'll therefore gain the point he has been driving at, and will have the *honour* of being left behind."

"Is he really ill?"

"In mind he is, and has been so since the moment when orders were issued in England for our regiment to engage in foreign service."

"Are you not too severe?"

"I fear not—nor do I believe that you think I am: but enough of him for the present, for we are unnecessarily losing time."

They

They now hastened to join the troops, and, in less than two hours after, in a transport, they were again

AFLOAT.

The discovery which Osrick had made regarding the secret attachment of Dreadnought to Alethea, made him uneasy, and accounted for the gloom which had enveloped the Captain's spirits, and which he had so often noticed with regret. He had that sincere esteem for Dreadnought, and was so interested for his welfare, that, Alethea excepted, there was scarcely any thing that he would not have given up to have promoted his happiness. As it was, the only thing that he could resolve upon was, that of never mentioning her name in his presence, when it could possibly be avoided.

His thoughts were now alternately occupied by the above perplexing circumstance, and the probable fate of the captive

tive Clara. He recollected the horrid situation from which he had had the good fortune to rescue her; and though the villain that had insulted her had paid the price of his crime with his life, there were but too many others of the same diabolical clan, he but too well knew, who would not scruple to gratify any passion with which they might be actuated, at the expence of all laws, human and divine.

The more he reflected on what had occurred, or might happen, the more uneasy he became; and to drive the subject from his mind was impossible.

Dreadnought was now in the same transport with him, which had not been the case when they sailed from England, and the particulars of his late adventure were consequently more amply discussed and animadverted on between them.

It totally puzzled Dreadnought to account for the horrid appearances which Osrick described as having seen in the ruins,

ruins, and which rather than have encountered, he said, he would have marched to the muzzles of a battery of cannon, when the matches were on the instant of being applied to the vents.

Clara was much spoken of, but not a word was said of Alethea, both, apparently, being determined to avoid pronouncing her name.

Though they had embarked on the seventeenth of June from Monte Video, it was not until the eighteenth, that the first division of the transports, among which they were, got under weigh, when the sails were unfurled, and they stood for Colonia del Sacramento, under convoy of the *Saracen* sloop of war, a schooner, and a gun-brig.

The wind, however, unfortunately proving unfavourable, they did not reach Colonia until the twenty-fourth, and from whence they sailed on the twenty-sixth, and joined Rear Admiral Murray and the rest of the fleet.

The

The Admiral had shifted his flag from the *Polyphemus*, a sixty-four gun ship, to the *Nereide* frigate, as in that, accompanied by the *Medusa* frigate, *Pheasant* sloop of war, and the gun-brigs and gun-boats, he could be more conveniently situated to cover the landing of the troops.

On the afternoon of the same day, the whole fleet anchored off Ensenada, at about three leagues from the shore, and about eight below Buenos Ayres, though the journey by land from Ensenada to that city, must be twenty leagues at least.

It was at first supposed that the landing would be attempted above the city, as the enemy's most assailable point; but that intention, however, though scarcely any one could guess at any probable cause for it, had been abandoned.

During their voyage from Monte Video, Osrick had occasionally been amused by a young seaman, an eccentric

tric character, who had called him by his name, and told him that he knew both him and his father, as his friends did not dwell far from the neighbourhood of Somerton Lodge.

Osrick had enquired *his* name, but the answer he received was, that his seafaring name was

BEN BUNDLE,

but his real one he had particular reasons for wishing to keep concealed. His messmates, he said, only knew him by the name he had mentioned, and as Ben Bundle his name stood enrolled in the service.

He appeared not more than twenty years of age, and was muscular and well-made: his features were bold, his countenance ruddy; and on his head grew a plentiful crop of black hair, and which Nature, in such strong curls, had so twisted and matted, that points and roots appeared

peared both to be sunk beneath the surface of the skin.

The fellow was good-tempered, and fond of mirth, and seemed happy when he could succeed in making his auditors laugh, and in which it was his invariable practice to join himself.

Osrick felt his curiosity excited to know something more about him, and seizing an opportunity one day, when his time appeared to be but little occupied, after some previous conversation, he was induced to give a short account of himself, and that nearly in the following words:

"Though I don't mean to let you into the secret of my name, or my reasons for changing it, yet, seeing as how you seem so much to wish it, I have no objection to letting you a little into the mystery of who I am.

"My father, for aught I know, though a smuggler, is, as times go, an honest man; and my mother, Heaven bless

bless her! is, as a good mother should be, dutiful to her husband, and fond of her boy. I am their only child, that is, the only one that has had the good fortune to steer clear of the locker of Davy Jones.

"Though they had only me to provide for, I don't know how it happened, yet my father found it quite as much as he could do to pick up, in his employment, enough to support the three; and so I, at last, was placed as a lacquey to an apothecary, when just turned of fourteen years old, and my wages were two shillings a-week and my board. I continued there about six weeks, and might have been a carrier of drugs to physic the public for some time longer, but for an awkward accident that caused me to abandon my place. I was naturally fond of play; and often has my basket, containing the *loaded* phials for the sick, been deposited for hours in some secret corner or hole, that I had espied in my walk, while I joined in diversion with a youthful *crew*

with

with whom I had got acquainted. The hopeful rogues, knowing how I contrived to steal the time I devoted to them, on one occasion secretly found and rummaged my basket, shifting the labels of the bottles, and, in the end, leaving me totally ignorant of what they had done. The consequence was, that a fat alderman, ill from the effects of a surfeit, in lieu of a cooler and cleanser for his *locker*, received a heater of vitriol, that communicated such a flame to his calipash cargo, as presently consumed the main timbers, and shattered his hulk. Added to this, blisters were put to the feet of a running footman to a countess, as a remedy for the tooth-ach, which crippled and compelled him to give up his place; and a lotion for a swelled face was swallowed by a bloated attorney, whose excesses had terminated in an attack of the dropsy.

"The confusion occasioned by these events, at length, brought to my astonished

nished ears an account of the method by which they had been produced; and to avoid the *storm* in which I might have been *shipwrecked*, I *cut and run;* and after a time I became a kind of supernumerary piece of live furniture in the house of an old maid, at a salary a little improved. My principal employment there was to wait on, and to carry and receive messages for my mistress, or rather the superannuated Miss. The latter duties gave me access to her *cabin*, and let me into the secrets of her toilette. It was curious to observe how the appendages of this mortal machine, and the *rigging* she had to keep her *afloat* on the *ocean* of life, were scattered of a morning about her *hammock*, and places nearly *abreast*. A dead-light (an eye) seemed to peer at you from one spot, and her teeth occupied another; wigs of all sorts, colours, and fancies, were to be seen in a third; and an artificial arm, for she was deficient in a *fin*, was placed in a fourth.

False

False calves for the legs, pads, stomachers, and pill-boxes, with lotions, potions, powders, and paint, besides a variety of other articles, equally important and useful, and which it would prove too tedious to enumerate, had all their separate situations, and could be handed into service at a moment's notice.

"An unfortunate accident also lost me this place; for my mistress, one morning, desiring me to hand her a glass of water, as the devil would have it, I gave her one in which were immersed her eyes and teeth! the eye went down, or rather stuck in her throat, but the teeth, naturally enough, you know, went no farther than the mouth.

"Her moans and convulsed respirations presently let me into the truth of the case; and, to avoid the disgrace of being kicked out of the family, I took myself off without saying good-by to any one.

"My next appointment was that of call-

call-boy and stage-sweeper to an itinerant company of comedians; and there I was happy enough, though I got more kicks than halfpence amongst them, until my evil genius once more brought about my disgrace, and occasioned me to shift my quarters.

"The play, one night, happened to be *Richard the Third,* and which was to be succeeded by a pantomime, in which the motly hero, Harlequin, was to make his first appearance seated on a donkey. The thought was considered a new one, and promised much applause: However, during the play, as the crook'd-back *King* was bellowing for a horse, and offering the half of his kingdom, poor devil, for one, it struck me that there could be no harm in doing him a service gratis; so, without more ado, I led the donkey on the stage, and presented it to him, concluding that until a horse could be procured, he might contrive to make a tolerable shift with that; but I

soon

soon found that I had done wrong, for though the house applauded, and the roar of laughter was general, *King Richard* was in a fury, and raising his rusty hanger, would have brought me prostrate at his *royal* feet, had I not luckily saved my head by taking to my heels. The plaudits were now changed to hisses and groans, for everybody had perceived his *Majesty's* intention; and rightly supposing that what I had done had entirely proceeded from good-nature, they did not wish to see me used ill:—But this only made matters worse, for the disgraced *King* would have sacrificed me to his resentment if he could have found me, and vowed to be the death of me, meet me when he should. Of course, I never dared to be seen about the playhouse again, and the wide world was once more before me to range in; for I had resolved not to return to be an encumbrance to my parents, though they had begged I would, whenever I should be in want of a home.

a home. The affair at the playhouse, however, made a great noise in the town next day, and I was much enquired after; the result of which was, that I had the honour of wearing a livery in the service of a Bishop. There I continued for better than two years, when happening, one night, in holding a candle to his reverence, while he examined a trunk full of loose papers, to set fire to his wig, I suddenly snatched it from his head, to save that from being scorched, and threw it on the grate, where it was presently consumed. The Bishop, not being aware of my motive, as he was entirely ignorant of the effect which my negligence with the candle had produced, stormed like a madman, and seizing the poker, in his rage to punish the daring indignity that had been offered to him, I was once more compelled to retreat, to save my life. The whole house was now in confusion, and scouts were sent after me in all directions, but I contrived to avoid them all:

and thus, after a servitude of a few years, but during which I had *burnt out* an alderman, crippled a running footman, lotioned an attorney, nearly choked an old maid, disgraced a *monarch*, and set fire to a bishop's wig, I took his Majesty's bounty, and became a son of the ocean.

"Here I have been about two years, and though I am only what they call *before the mast*, I don't dislike my birth; and it turned out fortunate for me that I thought of such a place when I left the Bishop, for my father, at that time, had been fortunate in the *fair trade**, and I might have consented to live with him, and I believe I should, whereas having taken the bounty, I merely shook hands with him, kissed off a tear from poor mother's cheek, and left them."

Tears stood in his own eyes at the recollection of the latter occurrence, in

* A common distinction among smugglers, for contraband traffic.

spite

spite of his efforts to repress them, and he turned aside his head, lest Osrick should behold them. Osrick did behold them, nor did his character sink in his estimation by the circumstance.

"Goddess Nature,
Whose subtle power pervades the heavy mass
Of earth and water,
Say, were not those thy passions, those thy tears?
Did they not flow from thy sacred fountain
Of universal love?"

Suddenly recovering from his emotion, he continued—"I was sorry, at the time, for what I had done, though I have reason enough to be glad of it now; for the revenue officers have played the devil with my father since; and, if any reliance can be placed on the words of old Madge, more lives than one have been lost."

Struck with the name, Osrick eagerly enquired who old Madge was?

"Oh! she is a convenient body enough," he replied, "and once did

live in a house built in the hollow of a hill, not many miles from Somerton Lodge, and that too, at the time when the disasters I hinted at happened, though she has removed—for the house, for *security*, has been pulled down since."

Osrick now had scarcely any doubt, but the old Madge he alluded to was the very woman from whose residence he had fled to escape assassination, and in whose residence he had discovered the disfigured remains of a human creature, that had at first taught him to be aware of the necessity which existed of his being watchful of his own safety; and which, combined with the words of dreadful import he had heard, while listening at the door of the chamber, had occasioned him so abruptly to quit the place.

"I believe," said Osrick, "that I have been at the house you speak of in the hollow of the hill, and that old Madge, as you call her, and myself, are not altogether unknown to each other. I wish

wish very much to know something more about her."

"What, you belonged, at one time then, I warrant, to the excise, and your presence at the house, I suppose, has occasionally been

AN UNPLEASANT INTERRUPTION

to the pursuits of the family—if so, may Belzebub sweep his parlour with you, and burn the broom!—so the devil of a word more do you get from me.

Osrick, however, having succeeded in removing his suspicion on that head, made him partly acquainted with the circumstances that had introduced him to Madge, and slightly hinted at the sight he had obtained of the body in the coffin.

Ben Bundle, on his part, now betrayed symptoms of surprise, and his manner rather intimated to his auditor, that

he had, undesignedly, revealed more of a certain secret than he had intended.

"So, so," at length, he stammeringly observed, "it was your honour then who was so *grateful* for the shelter afforded you?"

"What do you mean?"

"Why, didn't you run away in the middle of the night, without saying thankye to any one? and didn't you throw the house into confusion when they found you were gone?"

"Did I?"

"To be sure you did.—But no matter, they forgave you, and so do I."

"But perhaps I may not have forgiven them."

"How did they offend you?"

"Did they not meditate an attempt upon my life?"

"They! poor souls, no!—But why do you ask such a question?"

"You shall know presently; but first tell

tell me if murder had not been committed there prior to my arrival?"

"No—yes, that is, a man was killed; but not there, nor by them—but——"

The loud voice of the boatswain here stopped him short, and he suddenly exclaimed—"Belay, boys!—fore and aft, all on duty!—prepare for squalls!—wet or dry!—fine or foul!—a peep into the clouds, or the deepest cabin of Neptune, all's one to Ben!"

Osrick now lost his companion; and he the more severely regretted the unpleasant interruption, as he could never get any private conversation with Ben afterwards. However, he was determined to learn something more of him when opportunity suited, and for which purpose he made a minute in his memorandum, of the name of the transport in which he then was, that in case Ben should be shifted to another vessel, he might be enabled, without much difficulty, to find him. The preparations that were making for

so occupied the attention of every one, or by an application to his commander, he would have compelled Ben to have been as explicit as he wished, at that time; but as it was, he was of necessity obliged to postpone his intention.

On the twenty-seventh of June, though rather late in the day, some part of the transports weighed anchor, and stood as close for the shore as the depth of the water would admit of; and on the twenty-eighth, the remainder did the same, when the first division of the troops, commanded by Sir Samuel Achmuty, without opposition, effected a landing; and, soon after, the second division, commanded by Brigadier General Lumley, gained the shore also; and before sunset the whole of the transports were relieved of their scarlet cargoes, free from accident, and the forces had formed on a plain, disagreeably wet and swampy, at about

about two miles distant from Ensenada, and which place they soon after reached.

This village merely consisted of deserted huts, for the inhabitants had fled, rather choosing to trust to a precarious existence abroad, than meet the menacing horrors of war, as it were, at their own doors.

These miserable huts could afford but little shelter for the soldiers, as they were not very numerous, and had been stripped of almost every thing valuable or convenient.

In this vicinity, strong picquets and outposts were established; and here, free from any interruption, (for, as yet, an enemy had scarcely been seen) the army, after its landing, passed the first night.

On the day following, the whole were presently formed in marching order, and soon after nine o'clock, A. M.

THE MARCH

commenced. It is scarcely possible to

form an idea of the difficulties which, through the badness of the roads, the brave fellows now had to contend with. For some hours in succession, they were compelled to wade through the most noxious and offensive bogs and swamps, being seldom less than knee-deep, and often proceeding at the hazard of being drowned; and, here and there, one, it was said, did perish in that miserable manner.

The heavy cannon, it was found impossible for the troops to drag after them; they therefore were under the necessity of dismounting and spiking the whole of them, five light six-pounders excepted, which, with incessant toil and fatigue, they at last succeeded in getting through the marshes.

Had the enemy attacked them in this perilous quarter, their situation must, indeed, have been dreadful; but the enemy had not expected them at a part so distant, and, at the same time, so dangerously damp and swampy, that it required

the

the constitution of a frog, or, at least, to have been amphibious, with moderate security to pass over.

The situation chosen for the operations of the troops, at this period, it is believed, was a matter of surprise and regret to all, the redoubtable commander in chief excepted.

After a laborious and tedious march of at least seven hours, the troops had scarcely proceeded ten miles, when, having reached ground comparatively favourable, they, by corps, filed off in different directions, and lay all night upon their arms, the picquets of every regiment being kept upon the *alerte*, in consequence of some straggling parties of the enemy's cavalry having been distinguished prior to the close of the day.

On the thirtieth their march was continued, through a diversified and beautiful country, though rendered inconvenient by many rivulets, which the men were obliged to ford.

About two hours after mid-day, the whole halted for the night, a watchful look-out being kept by the picquets as before, irregular bodies of the enemy's cavalry being observed, though they possessed not the temerity to approach.

Several heavy showers of rain in the night proved extremely unpleasant, and robbed the troops of what little repose they had expected to obtain.

About four o'clock in the afternoon of the first of July, the main army reached the village of Reduction, which it had been expected that the enemy would defend, as he had collected a considerable force there; but, contrary to expectation, on the approach of the advanced brigade, under General Craufurd, in which were Osrick and Dreadnought, the enemy suddenly fled towards Buenos Ayres, and where the whole of his force, soon after, appeared to be concentrated.

Two ships this day were burnt in the roads of Buenos Ayres, to prevent their

falling into the hands of Admiral Murray, who was then coming round with the gun-boats, &c. with the apparent determination of cannonading the city, should if be thought advisable, and to assist the troops in whatever way the exigencies of the moment should require.

This night proved excessively humid and tempestuous, to the inclemencies of which the men were fully exposed, and completely drenched to the skin. From some singularly unaccountable cause, the disagreeables they endured were rendered the more painful, from no spirits being issued, to enable them to resist the chilling effects of the falling torrents, and preserve their healths; added to which, no regular supply of provisions could be obtained, and they were hourly harrassed by parties of the enemy's horse.

The exulting hope, however, and which was generally enjoyed, that the grand attack would be made on the following morning, and Buenos Ayres consequently

quently in their possession, warmed every heart, and robbed every individual of the slightest inclination to murmur. Cold, hunger, fatigue, and every other unpleasant particular, was forgotten in the rapturous anticipation of being enabled to compleat that task which their King and their country required of them, ere the sun had enriched, with his golden spangles, the western horizon of the succeeding day.

Heroes more loyally courageous, better disciplined, or that displayed greater anxiety gloriously to distinguish themselves, than the British did on this occasion, never promised the laurel of victory to a commander.

It is, however, an incontrovertible fact, that the efforts of brave men, on most occasions, and in all of dangerous enterprize and moment, are insufficient to command success, unless their efforts are well directed; and a fatal and melancholy instance of what is here advanced,

the

the result of the South-American expedition exhibited to this country. But to return to our narrative.

After a night the most distressing and unpleasant, the troops, ripe for the contest, and eager for the fray, were formed in readiness to attack the city, on the morning of the second of July.

General Gower now assumed the command of this advanced division, who, partaking of the hilarity of the brave fellows under him, marched them onward for the scene of action, for the purpose of posting them in an advantageous position, prior to their junction with the main army, which now, it was momentarily expected, would leave Reduction, and form in their rear.

From the nature of the soil and country, the march, on this day, was compelled to be a circuitous one, particularly as it had been resolved that the army should ford the Rio Chuello, some miles above

above the bridge, which was strongly fortified with cannon.

The division had now advanced several miles, but the main army, to the astonishment of every one, had not made its appearance.

A body of the enemy's horse, their right flanked by a wood, and their left by a small river, at length opposed themselves, to stay the farther progress of the advanced division. The head of the British column, under the guidance and command of General Craufurd, now pushed forward—the enemy in an instant was routed, and a passage thereby opened to the Chuello, the bank of which they reached about four o'clock in the afternoon.

To their increased surprise, mortification, and regret, neither General Whitelock, nor any part of the main army, as yet were to be perceived.

The troops now forded the river, waist deep,

dee p, with their ammunition pouches, to preserve them dry, thrown across their necks, in which manner, with the utmost regularity and dispatch, the whole got over, free from accident, dragging the two field-pieces before mentioned after them.

General Craufurd, with his brigade in front, scoured the orange-groves, thick arbours, hedges, and other covers that skirted their route, of the enemy; and, at length, entered the lanes that led to the city.

It was now about sunset, and all hopes of seeing the main army for that night were nearly abandoned.

This division, however, continued to advance; and on approaching, by an angle, to

MISERERE DEL MATADERO,

General Craufurd suddenly found himself opposed to about three thousand of the enemy, commanded by Liniers in person, supported by twelve pieces of artillery in his front, and from whence was instantaneously

instantaneously poured upon him a copious discharge of grape.

At this instant of extraordinary jeopardy, an order was given for a large proportion of the brigade to charge with the bayonet, and dispute the ground even at the muzzle of the enemy's guns; and never was an order more promptly and more successfully obeyed.

The ruggedness of the ground, rendered the more difficult to pass by innumerable wild shrubs, that sprouted spontaneously from it, for some time impeded the troops in their advance; but nothing could subdue the ardour of the moment; each strove to be the first to meet his opponent; not forgetting, however, that regularity of action, on which their own safety so materially depended.

Their cheers made the welkin ring, and their enemies tremble, a large proportion of whom speedily took to their heels, in the utmost disorder and dismay.

Like angry lions wounded by the spears

of

of the hunters, the British now gained the battery, hurling destruction on their foes, not one of whom that had the temerity to await their arrival escaping the bayonet.

The success of this action was as brilliant and decisive as its execution was rapid and bold; and had the main army been in their rear at this momentous crisis, Buenos Ayres must have been captured in the space of a few hours.

The English, in this gallant exploit, lost about thirty men, the enemy nearly three hundred, besides twelve pieces of cannon, and a considerable quantity of ammunition.

It was afterwards found that Liniers himself, completely cut off from retreating to Buenos Ayres, by the rapidity with which the British had advanced, had literally spent the night within the advanced posts of our army; but that favoured by the badness of the weather, he had succeeded in regaining the city about

about the dawning of the following day.

Dreadnought was wounded in this action. On the battery, Osrick saw him waging unequal war with a party of the Spanish soldiery, headed by an officer, the sword of the latter having deeply pierced him in the thick part of his arm, which had prevented the weapon from entering his chest, but which was again drawn back, reeking with his blood, to pierce him through the body, and that when he was too much occupied to parry the thrust, when Osrick darted to his support. The sword which might have terminated his life, Osrick struck down with his own, and after a combat of a few minutes, wounded its possessor, the bayonets of the assailants, in the end, laying him low.

Dreadnought's wound bled freely, but after shaking Osrick by the hand for the timely service he had rendered him, and permitting him to tie a handkerchief round his arm to stay the effusion of blood,

which

which occupied him not more than two minutes, he again was to be found with his men.

The intrepid conduct both of Osrick and Dreadnought was seen and acknowledged by their commander; but so nobly had every one behaved, that it would have been a difficult point to ascertain which had best deserved the meed of praise.

The brave Craufurd looked with an eye of pleasure on the dauntless individuals he had the honour to command, and anticipated, notwithstanding the drawbacks he then saw they were fated to experience, in the bad management of his superior, a favourable result from their future efforts.

Elated by the success they had so gallantly obtained, though unsupported by the main army, they were then moved forward, if possible to improve their advantage, the brigade having previously been

been strengthened by an addition of two regiments.

The last rays of the sun had now disappeared; but, pushing forward in the dark, they, at length, gained the entrance of several of the streets, and which they, in silence, occupied, fully prepared to act on the shortest notice.

After, however, being in possession of their important posts for an hour or two, an order was issued for them to retreat; for, without the assistance of the main army, farther operations, if not impracticable to secure the city, were considered as too fraught with danger to be risked.

Their retreat was conducted in the best order, and in about half an hour the troops once more were to be found at Miserere, where General Gower, with the main of the division, had halted after the action.

Near this place, the troops, on a plain, open,

open, for a considerable distance, towards the city, but bounded on all sides by woods and thick covers, which rendered a vigilant watch neeessary, lay on their arms all night.

Their situation now was truly unpleasant; the bodies of the slain lay scattered in all directions, intermingled with the bones and half-consumed carcases of cattle, green, putrid, and offensive, the effluvia of which was dreadful.

Generals Gower, Craufurd, and Lumley, under the protection of a strong guard, occupied a tenement but a trifling distance in the rear.

The troops, harrassed with fatigue, and many of them smarting with their wounds, their clothes dripping wet, and themselves pinched with cold and hunger, for many hours had elapsed since they had taken sustenance, threw themselves on the ground, with a patience the most exemplary, without murmuring, waiting for the return of day.

About

About midnight they were disturbed by the explosion of cannon and musketry, proceeding from the direction of the city, the houses of which were all brilliantly illuminated, and the inhabitants trembling under the alarm of being immediately attacked. The firing, however, soon ceased, and the troops had been in nowise annoyed by it.

To add to the horrors of their situation, early in the morning, the soldiers were disturbed by a tremendous storm of thunder and lightning, accompanied with such torrents of rain, that the grounds about them were presently inundated; and not such a thing as a dry thread was left in the habiliments of the whole division.

Daylight, however, at last gave birth to new hopes, and the ardour of honourable warfare, and of souls resolved on the execution of their duty, again brightened every countenance, banished regret, and exhibited a pleasing, but fallacious outline of the future, in which they vainly

imagined

imagined that they saw a compensation for their sufferings in the possession of the town.

Dreadnought's wound pained him acutely in the night; but to Osrick's solicitations that he would pay attention to it, and have it dressed in the best way that circumstances would admit of, he replied—"I have been too used to such adventures to feel much inconvenience at this; 'a noble scar, or a scar nobly got, is a good livery of honour.' I shall do well—there are others that suffer much more than I do; it would, therefore, if I felt the inclination, be a crime in me to complain, or to have that attention paid to my trifling hurt, beyond what circumstances may have hitherto permitted should be paid to theirs. It will be time enough for the surgeon to think of me when we get into the city, and there we assuredly must be before the setting of the sun to-morrow, or we have had time to dine."

"I had possessed sanguine hopes,"

said Osrick, "that we should have been there prior to this time."

"And, to speak the truth," observed Dreadnought, "so had I—but the less that is said upon the subject, the better, or we may be suspected of levelling censure at our superiors, and which, you know, forms no part of a soldier's duty. He may have sufficient reasons for the delay, and I hope the result will justify it."

"But if the result should not?" said Osrick.

"If we perform our duties," replied Dreadnought, "the disgrace of his conduct, should it incur any, which I hope may not be the case, cannot attach to us; so, with your permission, we'll dismiss that topic for the present."

Osrick, of course, acquiesced; and thus finished the conversation at that time.

To the comforts of the men, the officers administered to the full extent of their power; but they could not perform impossibilities,

possibilities, and controul the elements; neither did the brave fellows require kinder or more conciliating behaviour than they met with from them, and which obtained for them their unfeigned thanks.

THE THIRD OF JULY

did not open a very bright day to them, when this advanced division was again formed in order for action.

Still no intelligence of the main army had been gained, and the perplexity of General Gower, the second in command, in consequence, may well be imagined.

In this supensive state, he dispatched a flag of truce to the city, conveying an oral summons to the Spanish Governor, to surrender the town and citadel to his Britannic Majesty, though, perhaps, this measure was more pursued to gain time, and give the main army an opportunity of coming up with them, than from any idea possessed of the summons being complied with.

An answer, however, was returned to it, and which was, that the Spanish Governor would not listen to any proposals, but such as were communicated in writing.

About noon, therefore, the main army not being arrived, a second summons, in writing, was sent to the Governor to surrender the place; but the answer returned by Liniers was, that he would defend it.

Some time before the latter answer, however, had been obtained, the skirmishers had been employed; and the Spaniards now, in a large compact body, advanced to oppose them.

In consequence of this movement of the enemy, the skirmishing parties were strengthened, with orders to retreat as the enemy advanced, with the idea of decoying him to the open part of the plain, and there, though he was so superior in strength, of fairly giving him battle.

Liniers, however, was not to be so deceived. The Britons, he knew, would not

not have retreated, had they not some very particular point to answer in doing so; therefore he declined pursuing them, and, in the end, retired to the town.

The skirmishing parties were much employed this day, and the enemy must have lost a considerable number of men, though no solid advantage appeared to have been gained thereby.

About an hour before sunset, the arrival of the main army was announced, and General Whitelock established his head-quarters, protected by a very strong guard, in the rear.

During the night the advanced posts of the British were not a mile distant from the citadel, though scarcely any thing occurred besides worth mentioning.

Between eight and nine o'clock in the morning of

THE FOURTH OF JULY,

the troops were again in readiness for the

grand attack, not dreaming that they were to be harrassed by a further delay, though they were aware that the best opportunity of taking the town had already been neglected.

To their extreme regret and surprise, the whole of this day was wasted in ineffectual skirmishes, that destroyed a great number of men on both sides, our army, in the evening, being in the exact situation in which it appeared the night before.

The singular delays that had taken place, proved, in the highest degree, beneficial to the enemy; it enabled him completely to recover from the panic which had seized him on the second, when he had been so signally defeated at Miserere.

The mode of attack was, at last, decided on by the *skilful* commander in chief; and on Sunday,

THE FIFTH OF JULY,

the army, inferior in discipline and bravery

very to none in the world, was prepared to carry that plan into effect.

Dreadnought was in spirits when he found that something actually was to be attempted to take the town; though he shook his head and looked gloomily, when his thoughts reverted to the favourable opportunities that had been so unaccountably neglected.

His wound continued to trouble him much, but he seemed not to regard it; and Osrick was happy in having his company stationed next to that of his friend.

At sunrise the signal for the storming was a discharge from the artillery; and the troops, according to their instructions, in separate divisions or corps, at one and the same time, penetrated the town, by thirteen different streets, nearly equadistant, and parallel with each other.

Each corps appeared anxious to be the first to occupy its appointed post; and the manner in which the whole succeeded,

did honour to the British name and character, and which can never be forgotten by the enemy.

Orders had been issued for the troops to trust to the bayonet only, an order that certainly was correct, so far as attended their advance into the city, as irregular discharges of musketry might have retarded their progress, and caused some confusion in the respective lines; but how far it was politic, under such circumstances as must have been known they would have to maintain the conflict in, when the several destinations had been reached, must be left for others to determine.

The horrors to which the troops were now exposed, beggars description. Every house in the place was barricaded in the strongest manner; the bayonets, to which only the brave fellows were to trust, were of no service against an enemy beyond their reach, and who, from the house-tops on both sides of the streets, opened a galling

a galling and destructive fire of musketry on them, as well as from the windows, and through every hole or loop which would admit the muzzle of a musket to pass, dropping them down by scores.

The troops, enraged, not daunted, tried to force their way into the buildings to get at the foe; but that, generally speaking, was impossible, as they were deficient in instruments for such a purpose, and in but very few instances could they succeed.

Exclusive of the incessant fire of musketry that thinned their ranks, grenades, and earthen vessels, filled with the most nauseous and suffocating combustibles, which scorched and inflicted wounds deep and horridly painful to bear, were hurled at them with but too much effect.

So situated, was it possible for troops with ammunition about them, to abstain from making use of it? and they did make use of it in various instances, nor was any

censure levelled at them for the circumstance.

All that brave men, determined on a faithful discharge of their duty, could do, was done by them; but that all was not enough to gain the object they aimed at, though the fault attached not to them, as it was impossible that more could have been effected by the plan upon which they acted.

The horrid slaughtering in the town was continued for several hours, and the blood of British heroes flowed freely in the streets, but without relaxing the energies or cooling the courage of those that survived.

In the interim, the gallant Admiral Murray was not idle. The depth of water would not permit the men of war to stand in very close to the shore, but four gun-boats, appropriately situated, kept up a well-directed fire on the citadel.

During these momentous proceedings, scarcely

searcely an officer, or an individual in the army, knew where the General, the Commander in Chief, was to be found! a circumstance to which the annals of modern, as well as ancient warfare, it is believed, can scarcely afford a parallel.

A great number of our troops, at length, were compelled to surrender to the enemy, among whom, however, it happened neither to be Osrick's nor Dreadnought's lot to be included, both of whom had received several wounds, but none that promised to be attended with fatal consequences.

In the heat of the assault, one of the houses from which many dreadful discharges of musketry had thinned the company to which Osrick was attached, was, after great labour and perseverance, broke open; and Osrick, followed by about forty men, with the fury of tigers, incensed to desperation with what they had felt and witnessed, entered it, beating down and destroying all opponents.

At this critical period, a grey-headed old man, who appeared not to have taken an active part in the contest, surprised by the sudden rushing in of the military, dropped on his knees in an attitude of supplication, and feelingly entreated that his life might be spared! Osrick was near to him, and loudly begging of his men not to injure him, they passed him, forcing their way to the house-top, clearing it of the crowd there occupied in defending it, several of whom, to avoid their bayonets, threw themselves from the parapets into the streets, preferring that mode of perishing to the other.

The citadel was considered to be in the greatest danger, from the incessant fire kept up by the gun-boats, when a flag of truce from Liniers produced a cessation of hostilities; notice of which was sent to Sir Samuel Achmuty, at El Retiro, which place he had bravely carried, according to his instructions, and had, subsequently, as bravely defended, against the repeated attempts

attempts of the enemy to wrest it from him.

Soon after this the troops generally began to withdraw from the city, having sustained a loss in killed and wounded of upwards of a thousand men; among the former was Major Trotter, an officer of the most distinguished merit, and Captain Burrell, a young officer of such promise, that had it pleased Heaven to spare him, there is no doubt but he would have arrived at the first honours in the English army. The gallant Colonel Kingston, together with several other officers of the first talent and worth, were destined to fall on the bed of honour this day.

In the morning of

JULY THE SEVENTH,

General Whitelock shifted his head-quarters to El Retiro, on which day the terms that had been entered into between him and Liniers, by a written document containing

taining the following words, was made known to the army:

"Head-quarters, suburbs of Buenos Ayres, July 7th.

"The Commander of the forces, animated by the conduct of the troops under his command, and at the same time feeling for the distress of those in the hands of the enemy, has entered into a convention with the Spanish General, agreeing, that upon consideration of all British subjects taken before this period, as well as upon the late occasion, being liberated, he will desist from the operations against the town of Buenos Ayres, a measure dictated by humanity, and a policy which, he trusts, will prove beneficial to Great Britain."

The sensation which this announcement

ment occasioned, it would be useless now to attempt to describe; suffice it therefore to observe, that according to the tenor of the stipulations agreed upon, all the prisoners were liberated on the following day, and in the course of the three days immediately succeeding, they, with the whole army, had embarked on board the transports, to return to Monte Video, which place they reached on the fifteenth.

Prior to their evacuating El Retiro, Osrick, in taking a slight survey of the late scene of action, had been deeply shocked at a frightful spectacle which the peculiarly

DEPRAVED BARBARITY

of the enemy exhibited to him. The bodies of numbers of his slain countrymen, naked, and many of them disjointed and cut to pieces, he beheld piled up in one immense and ghastly heap, on the bank of the river!

His soul died within him at the horrid sight; his manly heart swelled with an indignation indescribable, and tears gushed copiously from his eyes, such as are raised by deeply sorrowing hearts, and which are not to be repressed.

"And why," reasoned Osrick with himself, as he slowly was returning to his quarters, and the first gust of horrible surprise leaving him, "why should I have been so strangely affected at what I beheld?

"*DEATH!*"

"what is there so alarming in the sight of?

"Death is the lightest evil we should fear;
'Tis certain, 'tis the consequence of life:
Th' important question is not that we die,
But how we die!"

The mutilated remains that had so shocked him, were the dross, the earthy dregs of fallen heroes; but the essence, the immortal

mortal parts, that had patriotically inspired, and given energy to honourable resolves, had left them, had winged their flight to everlasting realms, rendering the deserted clay of no account or consequence, in whatever way it should be disposed of.

To the living, the sight he had witnessed might be terrible, but in no shape could it affect the dead. The soul would equally find its way to Heaven, whether the body decayed, exposed above the surface of the globe, on a plain in South America, sunk beneath the mighty waters of the deep, or inurned with all the respect and gratitude that could be paid to departed worth in England.

"The question is not that we die, but how we die?" Honourably to quit the world is not to have lived in vain; it is the patriot's aim, the warrior's glory; it is the close and aim of their greatness, which, "like the sun, seems larger at its setting;" and prosperity, with a feeling approximating

approximating to devotion, shall contemplate the splendid annals of their deeds, and which shall only into oblivion sink with the world.

After a sail of four days, during which nothing particular occurred to him, Osrick again found himself at Monte Video. The spirits of his friend Dreadnought, he there perceived, had sunk to the lowest ebb; the disasters of the army had made a dreadful impression on him, particularly as he possessed the firm persuasion that such disasters might have been avoided. Nor were Osrick's sentiments of a different quality. Their

REMARKS

were continued in the following words:

"It is the first time that I ever was engaged in actual service," observed Osrick, "and had my maiden sword been honoured with a victory, the recollection of my first campaign would have been

rendered

rendered more pleasing to the senses, than it promises to be at present."

"It is the only campaign," said Dreadnought, "in which I ever regretted to have taken an active part."

"And why regret it now?—you have nobly done your duty; and had the result been otherwise, you could have done no more."

"Very true—but then, the torturing thought of what, with such an army of heroes, might have been done! Brave fellows! how gallantly one and all exposed themselves to be shot at, dropping momentarily, without a murmur of complaint, into the arms of death, and breathing their last sighs resignant to their fates! Had the enemy but been within their reach, as the plan of operations should——but, curse it! I cannot bear to think of it, and yet, for the soul of me, I can think of nothing else."

"But after all, who could have supposed

posed that the operations would so suddenly have terminated?"

"And you might have added disgracefully.—Who indeed could have supposed it?—Why there were still heroes enough left to have avenged the cause of their fallen companions!"

"But Liniers, did he not, hinted that the safety of the prisoners might have been endangered, if his proposed terms were not complied with?"

"He dared as well have beaten out his own brain, as to have hurt a hair of their heads; the hour of retribution was too much feared by him, not to have induced him to provide for their safe accommodation: but had it been otherwise, much as I love my countrymen, even the recollection that I might endanger their safety, should not have incurred for me the damning odium of not having faithfully discharged my duty to my Sovereign, agreeably to the trust he had reposed

posed in me, and to what my skill and perseverance might have commanded."

"It is one consolation to us, that it was not through any irregular proceedings of the troops the disappointment happened."

"The troops! brave, noble fellows, they are an honour to their country, and class inferior to none in the world: but how are your wounds, Somerton?"

"Painful rather, but of no consequence—How are your's?"

"I have none worth regarding but what rankles here," he replied, placing his hand to his heart. "Such troops," he continued, "and such a commander! I wish he had been pelted at in the streets, as they were; but, however, he took good care to avoid that—Where, in the name of wonder, did he poke himself during the storming?—curse me, if I can find any one that knows!"

"Do you think his conduct will be approved of in England?"

"A court-

"A court-martial, I trust, will tell him that—to that, therefore, I'll leave him; but whenever an enquiry into the unfortunate proceedings does take place, this I would tell him, were he to ask me the question, either you or I must certainly be disgraced."

"Well," said Osrick, with visible pleasure, "but we are once more at Monte Video!"

"Why are you rejoiced at that circumstance?"

"*RETROSPECTION*

is the cause of it," he replied. "Have you forgotten Clara?"

"I had almost lost the recollection of every thing but my own misfortunes."

"Shall we not release her from the ruins?"

"By all means; but is it possible that she can be so like——that is, can she be

so perfect in person as you have described her?"

Osrick perceived that the name of Alethea had nearly escaped his lips; he appeared, however, not to notice the circumstance, but replied—"When you behold her, you shall decide for yourself, and I am satisfied you will then say that I have not been too lavish in her praise."

"What force do you suppose will answer our purpose?"

"From what I could judge of the number of the robbers, it must nearly reach fourscore; about twenty of the soldiers, therefore, will be as many as we shall want."

"Suppose we say thirty; and if the Pampas double fourscore, we'll shew them some pleasant diversion.—When shall we set out?"

"To-morrow, early, if you please."

"You know the direct route to the place?"

"Perhaps not the direct route, but in the

the course of three or four hours marching, at most, I am sure I could lead you to the spot."

"Very well, that will do.—I'll speak to the Colonel presently—the assistance of the soldiers I am sure of—therefore, as early as you choose in the morning, we'll be on the *alerte*."

A thousand fears disturbed the thoughts of Osrick during the day; he almost despaired of finding Clara alive. He shuddered, as he recollected the perilous situation in which he had been compelled to desert her, and the days that had elapsed since that time. Even Dreadnought, from the description he had received of her, felt himself uncommonly interested on her account, and was fearful that their efforts to save her might be used too late.

According to his promise, Dreadnought obtained the soldiers wanted; they consisted of the remains of his own company, thirty privates and a corporal, the whole

of what remained of eighty brave fellows, after the carnage at Buenos Ayres, and who were in readiness to accompany him and Osrick at daybreak.

"I have another, and

A NEW EXPEDITION

for you, my lads," said Dreadnought to them; "and a little more fighting, I know, will be well relished by all of you."

The men smiled—"They'd fight for him," they said, "at any time, and any where; therefore he had only to give the word, and they should cheerfully obey."

With muskets charged, bayonets fixed, and cartouch-boxes well stocked with ammunition, they were now marched off, the nature of the service they were going upon having been first explained to them.

Osrick had been too accurate in the minutes he had made, to be deceived in the geography of the place, and in less time than he had stated to Dreadnought,

he conducted them to the mouth of the rocky cave he had visited before.

Here, for the first time, they halted. Nothing particular had occurred during their march, though the herds of wild cattle, that scampered about them in all directions, had they been in want of a subject to employ their thoughts upon, would have afforded ample grounds of amusement, and banished *ennui* from the warlike circle.

The ruins extended to a greater distance than what even Osrick was aware of. Some tower or castle, he supposed, had formerly stood there, of which all but the basement, the subterraneous passages, and the dungeons thereunto belonging, time or accident had destroyed; and these were so obscured, no entrance to any receptacles of the kind being visible, that Dreadnought was much surprised when Osrick told him they had reached the place they sought.

Their first object was to examine the cave;

cave; two soldiers, with bayonets fixed, advanced, while two others presented their muskets over their shoulders, therefore proceeded to the mouth of it, that in case any quadruped of prey had again made the place its covert, which was not unlikely, they might destroy it, with but little risk to themselves.

Such however happened not to be the case. The partial remains of the robber, in the most frightful state of putrefaction, together with the rotting bodies of the jaguars, were yet to be found there, sending forth a nauseous effluvia dreadful to inhale, but which, as the secret avenue that opened into the cave promised too many advantages to be easily given up, they were compelled to endure.

It was at length resolved, that Osrick and Dreadnought should, with fifteen of the soldiers, penetrate the ruins by the avenue in question, while the corporal, with the remaining fifteen, should continue within the cave, and occasionally

examine if any thing extraordinary was going forward without; but in case they should hear any discharge of musketry, they were to follow the party in advance through the same passage, and lose no time in hastening to their support, as sentinels would be planted at certain distances to guide them.

They were instructed not to attack any individuals they might chance to discover on the exterior of the ruins, unless it became necessary in the end, for their own defence, but merely to observe their points of egress and regress.

These weighty matters settled, Osrick ascended to the secret pass, and Dreadnought and his men were not long after him.

The singularity of their situation was now a subject of mirth to all of them; the place, though the day was totally bright, being as dark as Erebus.

To avoid accident, the bayonets had been returned to the scabbards, and advice

vice was given that the locks of the pieces should be as much guarded as possible, lest a blow against the rocks should produce unpleasant consequences, by letting some of them off.

With due circumspection, they at length penetrated to the sliding stone, where Osrick, though he had done it before, again explained the secret he had discovered to them, when, pressing the spring, he was soon enabled to continue his progress, each doing the same as he advanced, to stay the too sudden returning of the stone.

The dangerous descent from this opening, Osrick now made known to his followers; and then strictly enjoining that silence might be preserved, he was about to pursue his course down the rugged steps, when a sudden light from the vaulted passage, with the iron gate, and the sounds of approaching footsteps, suspended his intention, he, as well as Dreadnought, being desirous of discovering

who might be advancing, before they shewed themselves.

In a low tone of voice the soldiers therefore were desired to conceal themselves, by retreating into the avenue, but to be ready to act at a moment's notice.

Osrick and Dreadnought drew back also, as the light they perceived became stronger, gradually and generally rendering visible the frowning horrors of the place.

Two of the Pampas at length, each bearing a burning torch, with solemn pace and slow, approached by the iron gate;

A PROCESSION

of the horde, in number about thirty, two and two, followed them, and in the end arranged themselves in very close order at one extremity of the open space below them, forming a semicircle.

The raised situation of Osrick and the Captain

Captain gave them an opportunity of observing all that passed, with but little chance of being seen themselves. Neither spoke, each being anxious to know what was to follow.

The first party having arranged themselves as stated, a second, about equal in number to the former, made their appearance, preceded by torch-bearers, and who, with the same deliberation, formed themselves opposite to those who had first entered, leaving a space of considerable dimensions open in the centre, as well as in that part of the periphery nearest to the iron gate.

Hitherto they had preserved silence, but as two of the ruffians now came forward, dragging a female after them, preceded by a torch-bearer, and followed by two others of the ferocious banditti, the one bearing a ponderous tomahawk on his shoulder, and the other a scalping-knife in his hand, a kind of suppressed yell,

hollow and dismal, was groaned forth apparently by each.

The sounds were appalling—but not to the soldiers, for they betrayed an inclination to rush forward, but were prevented by their commanders.

"What an infernal place, and what an infernal crew!" whispered Dreadnought to Osrick; "I can almost fancy myself in the regions of eternal night, taking a view of the imps of darkness, assembled in congress, with terrific ceremony and diabolical parade. What is it they are about to perform?"

"What it must be our business, I apprehend," replied Osrick, "to prevent. Soldiers, be ready at the word!"

This was uttered in a whisper, and was not heard by those so busily occupied below.

The female, on her knees, her arms bound behind her, was now placed in the centre of the circle; a black veil, which

before

before concealed her face, was removed, her glossy ringlets flowing in loose disorder on her shoulders, partially only covering a face pale as death, but even in that state lovely.

Osrick instantly recognized Clara! and indistinctly ejaculated her name to Dreadnought, and again was silent.

One of the ruffians now, with as little ceremony as tenderness, placed a crimson bandage before the eyes and round the head of the hapless victim, who seemed almost insensible of what was done to her, so dreadfully were her faculties immersed in the current of terrors that surrounded her.

This being performed, a second object, a grey-headed old man, supported by two of the dusky predaceous tribe, was dragged towards the centre of the circle, the dismal yell being repeated, as they, with horrific malignity, pointed out to him the lovely sufferer, for whose execution it was now evident they had assembled.

The sight shook him to the soul! and suddenly dropping on his knees, he exclaimed, as his eyes were turned to Heaven—"All this I have deserved—my punishment is just; but oh! spare that unoffending victim, whom my crimes have involved in my unhappy fate!"

Words are inadequate to describe the increased astonishment of Osrick, when in the latter object, the grey-headed individual, he beheld the miser Grassingly, whom he had visited, with Belmont, at the lone house, not many miles from Somerton Lodge! Though he had not immediately on seeing recognized his person, yet when he heard his voice, the full recollection of it occurred to him.

As the poor old man concluded his anguished ejaculation, an instrument, not unlike a Chinese *gong*, was forcibly struck, the crash it produced being lengthened and horrible, when he was instantly dragged to a more distant part of the space, the torch-bearers, four of them taking their

their stations two on each side of the wretched Clara, two others of the gang supporting her on her knees from falling, for the crash of the instrument had pierced her to the soul, occasioning her bosom to heave with violent emotions, while the executioner, with the tomahawk, placed himself opposite to her, as in readiness to strike the fatal blow, that would end her sufferings for ever.

Dreadnought had already drawn a pistol from his belt, and Osrick grasped another. The moment was a critical one, and the next was more so, for another crash of the gong-like instrument occasioned the fierce executioner to raise the tomahawk with deliberate firmness, not to sever the head of his object from the shoulders, but to divide it down the centre.

An instant of indecision on their part, Osrick and Dreadnought now saw must be fatal. They were at no great distance from the monster who had uplifted the

weapon of death, and who, by his attitude, was preparing to give its descent all the force he could command. Stretching themselves therefore as far over the rocky eminence as they could, their pistols were presented and discharged at one and the same instant; the savage dropped, the tomahawk alighting on his own body; and Clara, released from the grasps of her brutal supporters, fell prostrate between them.

THE THREATENING COMMOTION

that now ensued may be more easily conceived than expressed. The word for the soldiers to fix their bayonets and advance was given; in an instant they rushed from the avenue, the din of arms striking terror to the guilty tribe, whose screaming yells, as they fled through the arches in all directions, no person could hear unmoved.

Having descended the steps, the military

tary were commanded to halt. Two or three of the torches, that had been thrown down and abandoned, being unextinguished, were presently secured, and Clara, without any signs of life, was raised by Osrick and Dreadnought.

The vital spark, however, they feared was gone; she breathed not, neither could a tremor of the pulse be felt.

To promote her recovery, however, if life had not entirely deserted her, air was absolutely necessary. Dreadnought therefore, as the only means of obtaining it, took the lovely burthen in his arms, and bore her for the rocky avenue, and from thence onward for the cave, followed by one of the soldiers only, having desired Osrick to remain where he was until he had been reinforced by the troops in reserve, and then to proceed and secure as many of the miscreants as they should be fortunate enough to find.

Osrick therefore remained at the head of his men, when Dreadnought departed, leaving

leaving them the sole occupiers of that part of the ruins, the savage that had fallen excepted, for even Grassingly had disappeared in the consternation.

Twelve men of the reserved part of the force at length joined them, though they had been detained some little time in their route, not being enabled to find the spring of the sliding stone, though accurately instructed where to look for it, and assisted by the blaze of a torch.

Stationing two men with a light where they were, with instructions to follow them should they be surprised by any of the ruthless horde, Osrick with the others, preceded by torch-bearers, moved onward by the vaulted passage he had formerly traversed; but on gaining the entrance of the dome-surmounted apartment, the Pampas, he discovered, had arranged themselves in a gallery that encircled it, with missile weapons and a few fire-arms to defend it.

One discharge, however, from the muskets

kets of the military, dropping some and wounding others, in an instant dispersed them; and this apartment, the instant after, was in their possession.

Three of the four iron doors were now open, that which led to the cave of death and horrors being only closed.

Leaving two sentinels here, Osrick divided his men into three equal corps, each then pursuing a distinct route, to which the doors led, at one and the same time, though all had orders to return to the dome as their rallying point, as circumstances might render such a proceeding necessary.

The door by which Osrick and his detachment entered, a torch-bearer in front, opened into a narrow vaulted passage, too narrow for more than one person to pass at a time, and which, after a walk of a few yards only, brought them to a flight of stone steps, and which he imagined led to the gallery that encircled the dome; and

and under that impression they instantly began to ascend.

The termination of these steps brought them to another arch, with a smooth marble surface, and displayed, at its extremity one way, a door seated in a gothic recess, another vaulted passage branching off on either side of it.

The whole were damp and green with age, and a moist vapour that generally pervaded them, struck a kind of chilly sensation to all that lived within its influence.

To the door which presented itself, they therefore advanced. It was of iron also, and resisted their repeated attempts to force it open.

Taking the passage to the left of it, under the supposition that it led to the gallery in the dome, Osrick commanded the soldiers to follow him, which they did, until their progress was obstructed by another door, which defied their efforts

to

to open, and they were compelled to return.

The passage to the right of the first door they now entered, but in the end were necessitated to leave it, through an impediment exactly similar to that which they had met with in the former.

While deliberating now how they should dispose of themselves, the ring of

A TRAP-DOOR

was discovered, which they presently lifted up, and beheld a few winding steps, that terminated in a narrow archway, which the light just enabled them to distinguish. This they resolved to descend. Osrick now took the torch himself, and led the way, but had scarcely reached the arch in question, when a discharge of musketry was heard, and, as had been agreed on, he instantly gave the word to return to the dome, which mandate, with suitable alacrity, was obeyed.

Osrick, from being previously in the advance,

advance, was now in the rear, and the gleaming of his torch having discovered to him another pass branching from the one in which he was, he could not resist the impulse he felt of slightly examining it, not intending to be more than one minute at farthest behind his men in returning to the dome.

Moving therefore about two paces only into it, and extending his arm with the torch, he imagined that he saw some figure standing in the distance, when a third step, for the purpose of confirming or removing his conjecture, brought him over a concealed trap-door, which sunk beneath his pressure, and he fell with violence through the yawning aperture.

What immediately followed he knew not, for in the shock he had received, having descended to a considerable depth, his senses had left him; but the first dawning of reason made known to him that he was a prisoner, his arms being pinioned, and his body with heavy chains confined to the damp floor of some nauseous dungeon,

geon, as dark as the total exclusion of the rays of Heaven could make it, and as silent as the grave.

The ponderous chains oppressed him sorely, and acute pains dreadfully affected his head.

Writhing in anguish unutterable, he for some hours continued, when the sounds of a sliding bolt, and repeated footfalls, announced the approach of some persons to the spot; and the glare of torches, borne by a party of the hideous Pampas, soon after revealed to him in whose power he was, and confirmed his previous apprehensions.

They reviewed him with a rage the most horrible and menacing; and Osrick could sufficiently understand their words, to be made sensible that his execution was only delayed that the

TORTURES

which were to accompany it might be rendered more terrible.

The

The murder of *Quisembo*, and what had since happened to them, they tauntingly, in screaming tones of broken English, accused him of being the author of, at times appearing ready to mangle him to atoms with their tomahawks.

From the latter however they refrained; but to increase the horrors of his confinement, the body of *Quisembo*, the features shockingly distorted by putrefaction, was brought into the cell, and seated with his back against the extremity of it, opposite to him, a piece of iron, in the shape of a large nail, being driven from the forehead through the scull into the rocky substance against which it rested, to prevent the body from falling on either side.

This performed, two blazing torches were fixed uprightly in the earth, to the right and left of the terrific lifeless figure; and Osrick was raised and chained in such a position, that his eyes could not be opened without beholding the fearful spectacle.

With a grin of triumph, the demons now

now left him, assuring him, however, previously, that he had but a very short time to live.

From the instant of his real situation being known to him, Osrick had resigned himself to die, and he had already survived the time he had anticipated would have been allowed to him.

His sufferings, at this crisis, are not to be described; his intellects became affected, and dancing shadows flitted before his eyes.

To the ghastly remains of the robber, his disordered vision at length gave action, and the frightful figure stood erect before him, pointing to the wound that had robbed him of life, which seemed to bleed afresh, while a lambent flame twisted itself about the orifice of the opening the iron instrument had formed in his forehead; the eyes appeared to roll in their sockets, and the jaw, with anger and agony, to quiver, the motion being singularly hideous and rapid.

Suddenly

Suddenly the phantom vanished, and again he beheld the horrid reality between the glare of the torches.

It was impossible for suffering nature long to endure such tortures, and live. A death-like torpor gradually encroached upon his senses; a dark mist gathered before his eyes; the racking pains in his head, and those which the chains inflicted, became less severe, and forgetfulness gave him a transitory respite from misery.

The reviving air of Heaven blowing full in his face, and a continued shaking that was given to his whole frame, at length aroused him from the stupor that had seized him, and he found himself nearly stripped of his apparel, and firmly bound with cords on the back of a horse, some person being seated behind to support his body, while the loud trampling of horses around him, for it was dark, announced to him that he was strongly guarded on all sides.

After

After travelling at a very swift rate in this manner for several hours, and until the animal on which he was was nearly dropping with fatigue, they halted, and he was taken off, and similarly fixed to another horse, his strength being too exhausted to make the slightest resistance to their will.

Again their flight, with uncommon rapidity, was renewed; and day had some time dispersed the noxious vapours of night, ere they again halted.

They had now penetrated a considerable distance into a thick wood, in an open space of which, Osrick, unable to stand had he been released from the cords that bound his arms, and which they also extended to his legs, as they then took him from the horse, was laid, and the Pampas were presently busied in digging two deep holes in the earth.

Osrick beheld their proceedings apparently unmoved; he was resignant to his fate, though the dreadful idea now struck

him

him of being buried alive; and a mental prayer for eternal forgiveness of whatever errors he might have committed was not forgotten.

In these dreadful moments, the recollection of what his dear father's sufferings would be, and those of his Alethea, when his death was confirmed to them, though the deplorable manner in which it had been effected, he hoped they would never learn, at length shot anguish to his brain. His heart now palpitated with a violence that shook him universally; and though his eye-balls were burning hot with the fever of despair, not a tear would come to his relief.

The savages having at last formed the holes sufficiently large for their purpose, another victim, although at that time Osrick had believed himself the only one for whom they were making preparations to destroy, was brought forward and placed in one of the holes above mentioned, in a standing position, and the earth replaced about

about him, leaving nothing of his figure visible above the surface of the ground but his head, around which some of the driest branches of the trees they could collect were immediately piled, and a light procured to set them in a blaze.

To these fearful proceedings they tauntingly directed the attention of Osrick. It was to render his sufferings the more acute, they gave him to understand, that the other was to perish first, that he might contemplate the progress of those tortures which soon, in reality, he would feel himself.

The fire was now communicated to the fatal pile. The inhuman miscreants, dancing round it with horrid exultations, rent the air with their triumphant yells, and appeared to derive new vigour from the cruelties they inflicted.

As the flames increased, the shrieks and dying groans of the sufferer were more loud and piercing than the yells of the demons about him; but they were not of

long duration, for the welcome dart of death gave liberty to his soul, and rendered its deserted habitation in this world as nothing.

But, gracious Heaven! what now were the feelings of Ostrick! his blood, with horror and indignation, boiled in his veins; his strength, at the instant, seemed restored to him; gnashing his teeth with anguished fury, he struggled hard for freedom; but it was not possible for him to release himself from the cords by which he was confined! His groans were loud and repeated, and execrations on the monsters escaped his lips, who grinned at his feeble efforts for liberty, and rejoiced that they had adopted a plan so admirably calculated to give him pain.

Raising him from the turf, they now pointed to the hole that had been reserved for himself, into which they instantly forced him, whilst others commenced the task of returning the loose earth into the cavity about him, that another tragedy, exactly

exactly similar to the last, might immediately be performed.

The struggles that had so recently convulsed the frame of Osrick, however, had proved too powerful for nature to endure, and not sink beneath the shock; his senses therefore again forsook him, as he felt the first adhesions of the loose earth about his limbs; and in him misery no longer found a residence.

It is now necessary to return to Dreadnought and the ruins, that the reader may be made acquainted with the alarm and

that was felt there, through the sudden disappearance of Osrick, and also of some other circumstances which subsequently took place.

The discharge of fire-arms, which had induced the division of the military that Osrick had headed, so suddenly, from the winding steps under the trap-door, to

make for the dome, proceeded from one of the parties, which had been successful in attempting to find the communicating passage to the gallery that Osrick, in vain, had endeavoured to reach, and where the robbers had again collected, but from whence they had been as easily repulsed as before.

Into this gallery, however, various narrow passages opened, by which the miscreants escaped, leaving three of their confederates dead behind them, and two others that were too severely wounded to follow them. The latter, of course, were taken care of; but all attempts were ineffectual to overtake and secure any of the others.

Tired, at length, with their fruitless search, the three divisions united in the dome, and then, and not till then, Osrick was missed; for the party he had formerly commanded in person, merely supposed that he had left them to give instructions to the others.

Not

Not a man was hurt or missing of the whole force employed but Osrick, and diligent search was now made for him, but without discovering any trace that could lead to a conjecture as to where he might be found.

In this distressing dilemma, a soldier was dispatched to the cave for Dreadnought; but a sentinel there left told him, that the Captain, having formed a kind of palanquin with the branches procured from the trees that grew about the spot, had placed the lady in it, and that he had accompanied six of his men, who were supporting and guarding her to Monte Video.

What now to do the soldiers knew not. To stay where they were was useless, as the whole of the horde, by channels only known to themselves, they were convinced, had escaped; but then, to depart without their Lieutenant, was cruel, and repugnant to the feelings of every one.

Another search therefore was cheerfully

made to find him, but with the same success as the former, though an opening that led to the exterior of the rocky pile, they thereby found of much easier access than the avenue of the cave.

Night, at length, coming on, and Dreadnought not returning, the sentinels were summoned from their respective posts by the corporal, who now deemed it prudent to march the whole force, some of whom supported the two prisoners, back to Monte Video.

The sun had set some time before they regained the entrance of the town, where they met Dreadnought, who, at the head of about twenty men, was marching for the ruins, supposing, from their long absence, that they had met with more difficulties among the robbers than they had expected, and therefore might be in want of more assistance than they could there command.

The Captain was soon made acquainted with the unfortunate absence of Osrick, which

which afflicted him very severely, and determined him in prosecuting his route.

The others, however, begged to accompany him, to which he at length consented, and promised to wait until they had taken refreshments, as they had fasted the whole of the day.

He now turned his attention towards the wounded prisoners, whose apprehensions of future punishment appeared more to afflict them than the hurts they had already received. One, in accents of broken English, petitioned him for mercy, but to which he made no other reply than that of informing his men how to dispose of and deliver them into the hands of justice, which order they immediately obeyed.

Dreadnought had felt deeply interested for the unfortunate Clara. Osrick, he found, had not been too lavish in his encomiums on her person; but what more astonished him, she did indeed bear a very strong resemblance to Alethea.

Finding it impossible to restore her to life, though she had the full benefit of the air on the exterior of the cave, he resolved to proceed direct with her for Monte Video, and which he did as before described.

The journey was performed with as much speed as possible, during which their lovely burthen had not once opened her eyes, and Dreadnought began to feel considerable alarm, lest she should never open them again.

In the town, he procured a reception for her in a family of the first respectability, to whom he briefly stated her case; and then went himself in quest of the surgeon of the regiment, upon whose professional skill he could rely, and presently brought him to her assistance.

Soon after this, on learning that the fair sufferer was gradually recovering, he paid a visit to the principal magistrates in the town, and informed them of what was going forward at the ruins, who were highly

highly gratified in being told that the haunt of the banditti, who had so long spread terror in the neighbourhood, was discovered; and who resolved to inflict the severest punishment upon all of the miscreants that could be secured, and to lend him every assistance he might desire, in the prosecution of the task he had so praise-worthily begun.

Assistance to secure the infamous disciples of blood and plunder, however, Dreadnought was not in want of; he could obtain more than sufficient for his purpose from the army; but he conceived it wise to procure the sanction of the magistrates, to give legality to the proceedings, particularly as many lives might unavoidably be sacrificed.

Perhaps there was scarcely a necessity for such a measure, and Dreadnought might previously have thought so, which accounts for his not having adopted it before.

Osrick, he conceived, would make the best use of his time in the ruins, where

he had left him, would make as many prisoners as he could, and, at all events, return to the town before the close of the day.

This, however, not happening, he began to be very uneasy on his account, and for the fate of the men with him; and had obtained permission to take as many more brave fellows from the ranks as he might deem necessary, to proceed to their support, and which he was in the act of doing, when met by the party, as before related.

In the interim, Clara had been slowly recovering; but, though restored to reason, she continued too weak and ill to converse; nor, in fact, would the surgeon, who had ordered that she might be kept quiet in bed, allow her to speak, or any interrogatories to be put to her whatever.

The shock she had received, he said, had been so great, that he would not answer for the consequences, if she were at all

all to be disturbed ; and, even under the most favourable circumstances, he feared that some time must elapse ere she completely recovered her health.

Dreadnought, however, felt comparatively easy on her account, as he knew, from an excellent character he had gained of the mistress of the house, that every attention would be paid to her; and he also joined with the surgeon in requesting that she might be kept as quiet as possible.

The troops, at length, having taken refreshments, and a suitable supply of torches being procured, with the instruments for striking a light, Dreadnought placed himself at their head, and marched them off, reaching the ruins about two hours after midnight.

The passage to the interior of the pile, last discovered, they now had recourse to, having previously lighted their torches, and were not long in regaining those

places they had so recently abandoned; but no traces of Osrick could be found.

The winding steps, by the trap-door where Osrick had been last seen, Dreadnought and a party at length descended, and found that the various arches, which branched from the one they at first entered, led to separate cells or dungeons, all of which were unoccupied.

One of the soldiers, in entering that pass where Osrick had met with his accident, found the concealed trap giving way with him, but fortunately saving himself from falling into it, he instantly apprized Dreadnought of the circumstance, who hastened to the spot.

The door was now cautiously pressed down, and by the light of a torch, thrust through the dismal aperture, they could perceive a deep square apartment beneath it, into which the soldiers generally volunteered their services to descend.

The means at last being procured for such

such an undertaking, by a coil of ropes that they had stumbled upon, Dreadnought was the first to descend into the cell himself, a few of the others only following him down the rope, one end of which was firmly secured above, as he had ordered the remainder to extend their search to the other parts.

This apartment, he found, was about twelve feet square, with a smooth bottom of stone, and unoccupied, excepting by several ponderous chains fixed in its sides, and themselves.

A quantity of coagulated blood, however, they discovered on its hard surface, which seemed, from its brightness, to have been but recently shed, and a something glittering like glass in the gleamings of the torch, which latter Dreadnought instantly stooped for and picked up.

On examining what he had found, he started with surprise on perceiving that it was a miniature portrait, set in gold, of a lovely

lovely object he had seen but once; but the impression which that one view of her had made on his heart, could not let him be deceived in her resemblance.

It was Alethea's likeness, and he well remembered that Osrick had had such a jewel in his possession.

That the Lieutenant had fallen through the trap above them, was now evident; and that he had been much hurt by the fall, as the blood, they doubted not, had been his as well as the miniature, was equally apparent.

These circumstances, though they excited their anxiety in a stronger degree for his safety, gave them, at the same time, additional incentives to continue

THE EXAMINATION OF THE RUINS.

A door in one side of this cell stood open, discovering a few stone steps, which they ascended, and which brought them to another arched passage, very narrow, but

but which was continued to a great distance, a deep flight of steps terminating it, down which they did not hesitate to pass, being, in the end, convinced that they were many feet below the foundation of the ruins.

A rugged, subterraneous avenue, they next, for some time, pursued, frequently ascending a few steps, and turning off alternately to the right and left, until they found themselves rising, by slow degrees, in a straight line, ultimately emerging from the earth, and penetrating a thick grove of tall trees which overhung that situation of the rocks.

It was by this channel they were now satisfied that the Pampas had been enabled to escape, and, they feared, to bear Osrick away with them; but to have pursued them farther, would have been as fruitless as absurd.

Leaving the grove, therefore, they filed off by the base of the ruins, until they arrived at the opening which

led into them, and which had been discovered in the last search that had been made for Osrick, ere they had been deserted to return to Monte Video.

By this opening they again reached the dome, where they found that the greater part of the soldiers had assembled, having taken two prisoners, one just without the pile, and the other secreted in a recess of its interior, apparently to escape observation.

The latter, Dreadnought instantly recognized to be the old man he had seen brought forward when preparations had been making for the execution of Clara; the sight of him therefore excited his sympathy, and as the affright he had suffered had nearly robbed him of his senses, and rendered him totally incapable of uttering a word, Dreadnought begged that every tender attention they could bestow might be paid to him, as he should provide for his comfortable accommodation, as soon as they returned to the town.

The

The other, though not habited as the Pampas generally were, yet his person and demeanour strongly indicated that he was one of them. Dreadnought therefore ordered that he should be bound with cords, while their search was continued, that no opportunity, though left unguarded, might occur to favour his escape.

The soldiers now made known to him the particulars of their discoveries, in which, unfortunately, nothing connected with Osrick, or that could throw the least light on his fate, was included.

The apartments occupied by the robbers themselves, as well those devoted to rest as other purposes, they had severally entered, all of which had been deserted, and not an individual of the plundering horde to be found in either.

It has been observed, that the fourth iron door in the dome, that which led to the cavern of horrors, in which Osrick had been so overcome, was the only one, on the first entrance of the military, headed by

by the Lieutenant, which had been discovered closed, and this now caught the attention of Dreadnought, who released it of the ponderous chains that secured it, and presently pressed it open.

A vapour, thick and noxiously offensive, instantly issued from the place, which evidently dimmed the blaze of the torches. The soldiers drew back astonished; Dreadnought partook of their feelings; and, as a hideous figure was distinguished in the distant gloom, he, and the greater part of those about him, with exclamations of horror, turned their heads aside, and involuntarily hid their faces with their hands.

At this moment a dissonant noise of voices, and the sounds of approaching footsteps, were heard from the vaulted passage that led to the iron gate. In an instant the soldiers were aroused from that lethargy of disgust by which they had been seized; they recoiled from the recently-opened door, fervently hoping that

that the Pampas, increased in number, had been induced to return to give them battle, and enjoy the full benefits of a British salute, and such an one as they were then preparing for their reception.

The sounds which had surprised them, however, becoming less distinct, they anxiously waited for their Captain's orders how to proceed, whose eyes, they observed, were again turned towards the cavern of horrors, from which now a singularly murmuring noise issued, in nowise grateful to any of them.

A battery of cannon, or a forest of bayonets, would have had no terrors for them, and gladly would they have exchanged their situation at that time for either.

A word, however, from Dreadnought dissipated their apprehensions—apprehensions of they knew not what—and they resolved to develop every mysterious particular of the horrid place, or perish in the attempt.

Leaving the military thus determined,

it

it may not be injudicious to inform the reader what farther befel Osrick, and how he escaped from the perils that surrounded him.

Overcome by the violent efforts he had made to free himself from the cords that confined him, he had become an insensible burthen in the power of the Pampas. The springs of life, however, had not been stopped never to flow again, and as reason once more became a concomitant of his existence, he found himself, though dreadfully ill and full of pains, extended on a soft bed, and an aged woman, with

MOTHERLY SOLICITUDE,

watching by the side of it.

He made an effort to rise on discovering her, but found the task beyond his strength to accomplish; and though he essayed to speak, he had not the ability to articulate a word.

The old lady, in soothing accents, begged

begged of him to try and compose his spirits. Though the power of speech had been taken from him, his organs of hearing were unimpaired, and he listened to, and strove to obey her commands.

"You have been ill—very, very ill," she observed, "and no wonder; but the virulence of the malady, I hope, is past. Compose yourself, therefore, to sleep, and, in a day or two, Heaven willing, we may get you about again, and in some measure discharge the debt of gratitude we owe you. I can perceive, by the surprise that beams from your eyes, that you hear my words, though you do not fully understand their import; but as you get stronger, the nature of them shall be explained to you. You are in friendly hands now. Thank Heaven, it has been our lot to preserve your life!—that is, it will be, if you will follow my instructions—which are, that you do not attempt to rise or speak, until I give you permission—and that you take such medicines and nourishing things

things as I shall myself administer to you; and were you my own son, my endeavours should not be more willingly exerted to serve you. Therefore, be careful in attending to my advice, and you may very soon be well again."

Osrick had indeed gazed at the kind old lady, with a surprise that had been powerfully excited by her words. What debt of gratitude could an individual, whom he had never before seen, have to discharge with him? and how had he been released from the ruthless ire of the Pampas? A thousand circumstances floated in his mind; but he was too weak steadily to think on any. At one time he imagined himself falling through the trap in the ruins, and, at another, the horrid figure between the glare of the torches would present itself to him. Then would succeed the remembrance of the dreadful execution he had witnessed, the preparation that had been made for his own, and the enervating terrors and struggles that they

they produced. At these times his emotions would be of that violent description calculated greatly to alarm his matronly attendant; and though her words soothingly assured him that he was in a place of safety, he was too reduced by illness, to shake the horrible imaginings from his mind.

For two or three days he continued in this distressing state; the pith and marrow of his bones, he fancied, were consuming in a fatal fever; his mouth was parched, and an incessant thirst prevented him from profiting by that grand restorer of oppressed nature, sleep.

Unremitting, however, he found, were the attentions paid to him; and as often as his perturbed spirits would admit of their being brought to his recollection, did he strive to obey the instructions he had received. The care taken of him, and the natural goodness of his constitution, at length began to triumph over his complaint, and favourable symptoms of returning

returning health to be produced. The fever left him; he was no longer afflicted with an insatiable thirst; and substances, bruised and properly prepared, as well as liquids, were administered, by his humane nurse, for his sustenance, until a relapse was no longer apprehended.

As his emaciated frame gradually recovered strength, the visionary horrors left him, his ideas became more settled, and the powers of utterance were restored to him.

Still his attentive nurse declined to gratify his wishes, in acquainting him with the particulars of his situation.

"You are not quite well enough yet," she would observe, "for such a disclosure; the doctor told me that you had not yet strength sufficient to bear any lengthened interruption, and my opinion perfectly coincides with his; therefore you must continue patiently to submit to my will, or the time may yet be very distant, ere any thing of what you desire to know

know can be revealed to you. You must be obedient, or you will put it out of my reach to do you any good."

It was just after a few words to the above effect had been uttered to him, one day, that he recollected the miniature he had received from Alethea. In an instant he searched for the precious gift, but it was missing. Cut to the heart by the fear of having lost it, a slight tremor seized him, while his eyes were directed towards his feeling and consoling guardian and friend.

"Have you seen it?—have you taken care of it?" he exclaimed; "I value it beyond my life!—Say it is in your possession, and you will make me easy!—nay more, you will make me happy!"

The good old lady, astonished, and somewhat alarmed by his anxious manner, as well as the singular rapidity with which his enquiring words were uttered, replied—"What is it you have lost? What

is the matter? I fear your turbulence will make you ill again."

"No, no; say you have got it, and all will be right."

"Got what?"

"A miniature I wore suspended from my neck—I would not lose it for the world!"

"I am sorry for it."

"Why are you sorry? You know not where it is then?"

"You forget my advice. I must absolutely leave you, if you disobey me. Why will you endeavour to distress your friend?"

"Forgive me! I would not have parted with it for a mine of wealth!"

"Pshaw! make yourself easy, it may be forthcoming by-and-by."

"You have got it then?"

"I'll answer no more questions; therefore, pray be silent."

Osrick obeyed her. The hope that he should

should recover the valued pledge of his Alethea's love, was contained in the last words of his benign nurse, and proved a welcome relief to the fears that had afflicted him. He suspected not that what he had heard was an innocent artifice practised to still the tumult in his mind, and prevent any impediment being raised there to his speedy recovery.

That he should see his Alethea again—should claim her for his bride, now occupied his thoughts, and improved his spirits; nor was the joy which he knew his welcome presence would give to his father, one of his least pleasing reflections.

The temper of his mind thus harmonized, his recovery promised to be rapid; and in a day or two more, he was enabled to leave his bed.

"I am now strong enough," he remarked to his nurse, after having been sitting up, for about an hour, in a large easy-chair in the chamber, on the third day of his being permitted to quit his

bed, "I am now well enough to be informed to whom I am indebted for the seasonable support that has been given to me, and to return my grateful acknowledgments, at least, for the life your kindness has preserved."

"Why now, my good Sir," she replied, "I believe I may indulge you in communicating any thing that you may wish to know, without endangering your recovery. If we have preserved your life, it was a debt of

GRATITUDE

we owed to you; and, thank Heaven, we have been blessed with the means to render that debt instrumental to your welfare."

"I cannot comprehend your meaning."

"You remember the attack that was made by your army on this town?"

"On what town?"

"Buenos

"Buenos Ayres."

"Am I now at Buenos Ayres?"

"Even so."

"Alas! I remember the circumstance to which you allude but too well!"

"If you can so well remember it, it is not very likely that we should very soon forget it."

"But how is that fatal proceeding at all connected with the question I asked?"

"You recollect your particular situation on the morning of the fifth of July?"

"Not all of them. I was in many particular situations.—To which one of that number would you call my attention?"

"You recollect having forced one of the houses in the street in which you were placed, and that having entered that house, at the head of a powerful body of your men, an elderly gentleman solicited your mercy, and which you timely granted, to save him from the bayonets that were presented at him?"

"I do remember that circumstance."

"In that very house are you at present."

"Can it be possible?"

"It is true; and the object whom, in the heat and indiscriminate rage of the action, you preserved from destruction, is my husband. Upwards of forty years have we happily passed together, and to have been so separated, would have been dreadful; you, and Heaven's choicest blessings be showered upon you for that act of grace! preserved his life; and thus you may now conceive the extent of our obligation to you, and which, by all possible means that may be pointed out to us, we will endeavour to discharge."

The recollection of the miseries which her family had survived, now suffused her eyes with tears, and which, soon after, in quick succession, trickled down her cheeks.

The surprise of the Lieutenant could but be extreme. He had merely done his duty, he said, and on that score was not

entitled

entitled to that unlimited service which she so liberally felt inclined to bestow.

"Had my husband died," she remarked, "had his venerable body been pierced by the bayonets that threatened him, a similar justification might have been your's. You would have been considered as having but merely done your duty; but may eternal honours grace his memory, who, when the battle rages, and death is heard in every sound, bids mercy go hand in hand with duty, and softens those horrors he cannot entirely prevent!"

The conversation now became extremely interesting, and, in the course of which, Osrick learned that her husband, a citizen of Buenos Ayres, had arrived at the first honours in the civil department of the place, but from which his age and infirmities had long since induced him to retire; that his fortune was immense; that a son and two daughters, all of whom had happily survived the late struggles in the town, would inherit the whole

of their wealth, when they were no more; that a few days after the British had retired from the town, her husband and herself had set off, under a very strong escort, for a seat which belonged to them in the province, about fifty leagues distant, for the purpose of continuing there until the town became more tranquillized; that their journey, for coolness, had been commenced in the evening, and that after travelling the whole of the night, they had been proceeding leisurely on as day illumined their track, when they were attacked by a numerous body of the Pampas, who, in the end, were routed and pursued by the guard, who protected the caravan from their plundering designs; that in their pursuits through the various openings and windings of a wood, he had been discovered, as the miscreants were in the act of partially interring him, in an erect position, in the earth; that he had been rescued and borne to the caravan, when her

her husband, in the almost lifeless burthen presented to him, instantly recognized the features of his preserver; that every restorative their situation could command, they had ineffectually had recourse to, to recover him, when finding all their endeavours to end in disappointment, and as they had not conquered more than one-fourth of the journey, on his account, they determined to return to Buenos Ayres, which they accordingly did, recrossing the Plata, and reaching their residence in the town late on the succeeding evening; that he had continued insensible during the whole of their progress back; and though the best medical aid had been, soon after, procured for him, nearly three weeks elapsed, during which time he had been frequently delirious, loudly raving, and alarming those about him for his life, ere the slightest dawnings of returning reason could be perceived in him.

The latter information Osrick received

with indescribable pain and astonishment. "Good Heavens!" he exclaimed, "what will the army think of my absence!—In how short a time can a letter be conveyed to Monte Video?"

"To what purpose would you send a letter to Monte Video?" enquired his auditor. "If to let the army know that you are here, it will be useless, for the troops have evacuated that town for England, now many days ago."

"Unfortunate am I indeed if it is so! They must conclude me dead, and my friends in England will be unnecessarily tortured on my account."

"Their joy will be the greater when they see you. H[illegible] pleased the Deity to have terminated your days, they must have submitted to the affliction. Many families will mourn, when your army reaches its native land; many fruitless tears will be shed for objects beloved, who, in good health, left them never again to return,

return, besides those which your imaginary loss will occasion: But the tears which shall flow on your account shall be wiped away by the cause of them; and the happiness of your friends, like the sun after a tempest, shall be rendered the more grateful in its operations, by the gloom which had enveloped it: their days of mourning shall find an end, ere they have well begun; therefore, do not make yourself uneasy by anticipating their griefs, but think only of the raptures which your unexpected appearance amongst them will occasion."

Osrick strove to appear composed. The picture his attentive friend had drawn, had had its due effect upon his feelings. They will indeed be happy, thought he, when they again behold me, after imagining me, in this world, separated from them for ever! But what will their sorrows be, however, prior to that time? How will my father bear the news of my death?

will it not crack his heart-strings?—will it not shorten his life, even though he should live to bless my return with his paternal embrace and smiles? Gracious powers! how will the affectionate and tender heart of Alethea be torn, when my supposed loss is revealed to her?—It is too much!—What agonies may I not be the cause of!—for what miseries may I not be reserved!"

His agitation now became apparent.

"What, I perceive you will torture yourself with gloomy reflections," observed his benefactress, "in despite of aught that I may do to prevent it. I shall very shortly begin to be very angry with you in earnest."

Osrick replied [illegible]; he was searching for the miniature of Alethea; he had forgot that it was missing, but presently recollected it. "The miniature!" said he, looking anxiously in her face; "have you found the miniature I have lost? if you have,

have, in pity add the restoration of it to the many benign acts you have already conferred on me."

"If I had found it, I would have restored it to you prior to this time; it must have been taken from you, antecedent to our meeting, for nothing of the kind was found in your possession. I did not inform you of your loss before, because I saw it would grieve you, and in your then very enfeebled state, so to have depressed the growing fervour of your spirits, would have been an act of cruelty, that must have procrastinated your recovery. Think of your loss now with firmness; and console yourself with the idea, that though you have been robbed of the semblance it bears, you may shortly have it in your power to converse with the original."

The misfortune that was thus made known to him afflicted him severely; but the motive which had prevented that misfortune from being revealed to him sooner, heightened those feelings which, with the

the sacred warmth of gratitude, glowed upon his heart. He endeavoured to conceal the regrets that but too acutely pained him, in his acknowledgments for the tender services he had received.

"Though you have amply compensated us for aught that you have received, or may command at our hands," observed his attentive benefactress, "yet you have my permission to make any subject your theme but that of despondence. I have not suffered my servants generally to be with you, but have principally waited on you myself, that nothing should occur that I could prevent, to retard the re-establishment of your health; therefore I shall not now allow your ideas to revert to gloomy channels, from whence no streams but those of sorrow can flow. Therefore, to hope, reviving hope, and happy recollections, devote your thoughts, and cheerfully shall I witness their grateful emanations. The sweetest reward that can be given for my attentions to you, and

which,

which, for the last six weeks, have been unremitting, is now presented to me in your convalescence; and therefore think of nothing that, for an instant, is calculated to deprive me of the pleasure which I now enjoy."

"Six weeks! can it be possible!—have I, for such a period, been an invalid beneath your hospitable roof?"

"Something better than six weeks have you been here, but more than half that time has been passed totally unknown to you; nor have you been well enough, until within the last ten days, to notice the revolutions of the hours, and gain any accurate ideas of how rapidly time flew."

"You do indeed surprise me!—How shall I be enabled to obtain a passage for England?"

"That will be easily enough effected, when you have strength sufficient to bear the fatigues of such a voyage; for the mouth of the Plata is never free from your terrific and vigilant floating cruizers."

"In

"In another week, at farthest, I hope to have health enough with safety to depart."

"I shall be quite satisfied with the progress of your recovery, if you are well enough to leave us at the expiration of another month."

"Pray don't talk so! How tedious will the time appear, under present circumstances, if I am compelled to stay here so long!"

"That must principally depend upon yourself. Banish from your mind all serious thoughts, and the time will pass pleasantly enough. I shall do my utmost to make the time roll lightly and agreeably to you. To-morrow I will introduce you to my husband and daughter; you will be well enough by that time, I hope, to descend to our family room. My son is absent, he therefore cannot be with us for some time, and my eldest daughter is married, and lives at a distance; but Amelia you'll find a lively

lively companion; and at this moment she possesses an ardent desire to pour forth her thanks to the preserver of her father."

"My dear Madam, pray say no more on that subject—you distress me.—I will be all you wish, if you will only abstain from such acknowledgments."

"Well, well, for myself then, for the time being, I'll promise that the subject shall not be introduced; but as for my husband and daughter, you must make terms with them yourself. In that particular, I shall not feel myself responsible for their conduct, whatever I may for my own."

Thus passed the time with Osrick, ere illness would admit of his leaving his chamber. It would have been a difficult point to determine in whose breast the pious flames of gratitude most powerfully operated, in his, or in that of his agreeable hostess.

What passion, in a cultivated and beneficent mind, is so easily awakened as that of

of gratitude? and once aroused, goodness will not suffer it to doze again.

.....

"When Gratitude o'erflows the swelling heart,
And breathes, in free and uncorrupted praise,
For benefits receiv'd, propitious Heaven
Takes such acknowledgments as fragrant incense,
And doubles all its blessings."

.....

"The wretch whom Gratitude once fails to bind,
To truth or honour let him lay no claim;
But stand confess'd the brute disguis'd in man.
And when we would, with utmost detestation,
Single some monster from the traitor herd,
'Tis but to say, Ingratitude's his crime."

.....

When left to himself, however, his thoughts would wander homeward. He trembled at the very idea of the miseries which his supposed loss would occasion there, and bitterly did he lament the loss of the miniature of his beloved Alethea.

The

The regretful surprise of Dreadnought, when he was first missed, he pictured to himself; and the greatest anxiety did he feel to learn the fate of the lovely Clara, and what farther discoveries had been made in the ruins.

PATIENCE,

however, only promised to gratify him in the knowledge of those particulars; and to patience, therefore, he resolved to be resigned.

.....

"Come what come may,
Patience and time run thro' the longest day."

.....

"How poor are they that have not Patience!
What wound did ever heal but by degrees?"

.....

Patience is a sovereign antidote; the most virulent maladies give way to it; it is

is the staff of hope, and fortunate is he who can make it his support. Though Patience has been quaintly stated to be "the virtue of an ass, that trots beneath his burthen and is quiet," it has not been rendered the less valuable thereby. What is the chief, the only consolation of those who depend on the favours of their superiors?—Patience! And how numberless are the race of such expectants, who would be rendered miserable, *even to the last day of their lives*, without such a salutary support? The sick man, if he gazes on, and is influenced by it, sees health in it; and the lusty heir the gratification of his desires, and the uncontrolled rummaging of the money-bags. In its religious and best point of view, the good man sees the reward of all his sufferings; but the Atheist, nothing! The soldier sees preferment in it; and the wiley politician a title. The boarding-school Miss may review the Temple of Hymen through this medium; and the impoverished client success,

cess, even in the tedious event of a chancery suit. In short, the wonders Patience performs are scarcely to be enumerated, though its benign properties disperse in an instant, when it is preceded by an *I* and an *m*.

At this period Osrick so profited by its beneficial effects, that, if possible, he determined to make it his companion as long as he lived.

On the following day he was introduced to

THE FAMILY CIRCLE,

which, at that time, only consisted of his benevolent hostess and the father and daughter. The old gentleman he recognized the moment he saw him; and much enjoyed was the meeting by all parties.

Osrick, when he could stay the ebullitions of gratitude for the service he had rendered to the head of the family, and who

who had since equally entitled himself to his acknowledgments in return, though he could not induce him to think so, and occasion the conversation to partake of more general topics, found his host a most agreeably entertaining and intelligent man, and he was charmed with his daughter. She appeared about nineteen years of age; and though her person was petite, it was remarkably good; her features were small and regular; the roses and the lilies vied for pre-eminence in her countenance, which was increased in interest and expression by the lively lustre of a pair of full blue eyes. Her demeanour was elegant, easy, refined, and affable—added to which, she was distinguished by an innocent *gaieté de cœur*, peculiarly her own, that rendered her indescribably captivating and engaging.

In such society, Osrick could but feel himself delighted. His health improved hourly; and his anxiety to return to England,

land, though nothing could entirely subdue it, became much less painful to be borne.

In their repeated conversations, nothing was ever said regarding the motive of the attack of the British on the town; for, as they could not approve of it, they forbore offending the ears of their guest by introducing the subject.

In a few days Osrick was sufficiently recovered, to take exercise in the pleasure-grounds that were attached to the mansion; and his excursions of this kind were rendered doubly pleasing, as the lively Amelia became the constant companion of his walks.

Amelia, in truth, was by his side during the greater part of the day. Occasionally she would sing to him. The dulcet tones of her voice enchanted him; and the skill with which she would accompany that voice, as her delicate taper fingers played about the strings of the instrument, evinced her to have made considerable

siderable progress in the delectable science of music.

The attentions that were paid to him by the daughter were witnessed and approved by her parents, whose affectionate hearts would appear to dilate with rapture, if he expressed himself to be happy in her society, or advanced aught in her praise; and which the sensations of gratitude with which she inspired him, very often prompted him to do.

Osrick was guarded from the subtle effects of the tender passion in this instance, by a deep-rooted prior attachment—but not so was Amelia; and Osrick, in the end, had the extreme mortification to know that their innocent intercourse promised to be fatal to her peace.

The instant, however, that a suspicion of the kind took possession of him, he delicately made his attachment to Alethea the subject of their discourse, by once more expressing his regrets for the loss of her

her miniature, and hinting at the indissoluble bonds which, on his return, would make her his own. Amelia sighed—averted her face, to hide her emotions, and conceal the starting tears.

Osrick, however, affected not to notice her agitation; and from that time their demeanor towards each other, though equally friendly, became more reserved.

The guitar was now entirely laid aside; her voice no more was heard in strains of harmony; and the innocent, interesting sportiveness which had previously accompanied her every action, was succeeded by a pensiveness which but ill accorded with her years, and which dimmed the sparkling lustre of her eyes.

Her parents saw the mournful alteration in their child with regret. It was also plain that they were no strangers to the cause of it, for Osrick had made no secret of his passion for Alethea in the family.

It was evident to Osrick, that the father and mother, perhaps influenced by grati-

tude, had hoped that he would have become enamoured of their daughter, and asked her of them in marriage; and the disappointment they had experienced, their conduct, at this time, but too feelingly evinced.

A month now had nearly elapsed, since Osrick had quitted the chamber of sickness to partake of their society, and as his health was nearly re-established,

A DEPARTURE

for England became the first wish of his heart. As he urged it, how could it be refused? The day was therefore fixed for him to leave them, and suitable arrangements, reluctantly, but with friendship, attended to.

Every supply that he needed, he had previously received from his liberal preservers; and though he persisted in declaring his intention of remitting the sums with which they willingly accommodated him,

him, from England, they secretly hoped that their words would operate, so as to induce him to abandon such a design.

The last evening of his stay there at length arrived. Amelia made an effort to appear cheerful, but the attempt was ineffectual.

"You will sometimes think of us," said she, "when you reach England; and I am almost inclined to believe that it would give my dear parents pleasure occasionally to hear from you."

Osrick took her hand and raised it to his lips.

"Believe me," he said, "the happiness I found here, when I thought myself the most miserable and unfortunate of men, will never be obliterated from my memory. How gladly shall I engage in a correspondence with such beloved friends as you have named, if they will honour me with such a distinguishing proof of their regard! It will give me the sincerest

delight, to open my whole heart to them on all occasions; and there can be no communications with which they may kindly favour me, but will be read with the dearest interest, as they will remind me of the scenes that I have passed, and how much I ought, indeed, to feel myself their debtor."

The suggestion of Amelia was a source of promised pleasure to all of them, and the proposal was readily accepted.

In the course of the night, the old gentleman observed, that, at some future period, and that not very distant, as such a voyage had long been the wish of his wife, if he lived, he would pay a visit to England, perhaps to pass the remainder of his days there, as circumstances might arise to bias his inclination; and, in that event, his daughter would certainly accompany them.

Osrick heard his intention with the rapture of a sincere and disinterested friend,

friend, and the subject gave additional interest to the conversation, and which abated not throughout the evening.

His final leave Osrick took of them prior to his retiring to his chamber, for it had been settled for him to depart very early in the morning.

Poor Amelia turned pale, and trembled as she uttered a last farewell; and was compelled abruptly to leave the room, to conceal those tears which she found it impossible to suppress.

The parting with her parents was of the most affectionate description, though the task was much less painful to him than with their daughter.

With a heart far from light, Osrick at length left them—but not to sleep; nor would his busy mind permit him to seek that opiate to the senses, by taking a recumbent posture on the bed.

He sighed at the idea of leaving Amelia. A beloved sister, for whose happiness he would have sacrificed his life, could not

more have engrossed his thoughts. Her attachment to him, however, he endeavoured to persuade himself absence would soon weaken, and that the most blissful of her days were yet in store for her.

Deciding, however, from the nature of his own unconquerable passion for Alethea, which time and distance had rather increased in force than diminished, his preceding conclusions appeared erroneous; but then, he thought, there had not been the time allowed for Amelia's attachment to become so deeply rooted as his was, though he did not consider that it had sprung from the same and only permanent source—esteem.

Soon after daylight, he was aroused from the reveries in which he had been indulging, by a loud rap at the door. Everything, he was told, was in readiness, and awaiting his departure; and soon after, a boat, with a flag of truce, proceeded with him down the river. A sloop of war, perceiving the signal, soon hove-

hove-to for the boat to come alongside; and very few words were necessary to procure Osrick permission to shift his quarters.

The Captain, on being made acquainted with those particulars that had separated him from the army, shewed him every mark of polite attention, but regretted that he could not immediately proceed with him for England, as his orders were not to quit that station. However, he promised to put him on board the first merchant-vessel thither bound that should heave in sight.

Perfectly satisfied with this assurance, Osrick,

AGAIN AT SEA,

made himself as cheerful as possible, though several days elapsed ere the Captain had an opportunity of carrying his friendly intentions towards him into effect.

In the interim, Osrick was not a little

gratified in discovering, among the crew of the sloop, his quondam acquaintance Ben Bundle; and he soon after found the means of interrogating him privately, as to those matters which he had so long wished to have explained. The promise of gold, and that none of his friends, if they had not committed murder, should be the worse for any confidence he might place in him, at length induced him to be as explicit as he wished.

His real name, he said, was Francis Medgwin, though, from being included in some heavy penalties, which he and his father had incurred during the short time he had been with him after he ran away from the Bishop, through their misfortunes in the smuggling line, he had, to avoid detection, been induced to change it. He had often heard, he said, from his father since, and he too had been fortunate enough to avoid being apprehended and thrown into prison, still continuing his illicit traffic, though in a much less extensive

extensive and dangerous way than before. The house seated in the excavation of the hill, he stated to have been his father's: he had contrived to build it himself, he said, with but very little assistance from others, when misfortunes began to threaten him, and rendered concealment necessary, and where securely he might have resided until that time, but for the ominous visit which Osrick had paid to it.

To Osrick's expressed surprise at his latter words, he stated, that about three nights prior to his visiting the cottage, one of the smugglers, in league with his father, had been shot by the revenue officers, in attempting to deprive them of some goods which they had previously seized: that he had had just strength sufficient to reach his father's house before he expired, after the bullet had entered his body; though his conduct, he said, had certainly entitled him to the fate he met with; and active exertions were made by the officers to find out who he was,

and to what gang he belonged. This proceeding, he continued, had induced his father to keep the affair as secret as possible; the death of the man therefore was scarcely known beyond the circle of his friends, and a coffin was privately procured for his remains. When Osrick had called at the cottage, he said, at a late hour in the night, old Madge, who was a relation of his mother, had forgot the circumstance of the corpse being in a large closet that opened into the room, the only spare one in the house, to which she had shewn him, until after he had, for some little time, been in possession of the apartment.

Osrick here related to him the words that he had overheard, and which, he assured him, he had not sufficiently understood, or he would have found that they only related to the method they should adopt to remove the body from the closet when he was asleep, but which, at one time, had been considered as impossible, as if he awoke, and discovered them in the

the act, they apprehended that the bloody deed, accomplished by others, might attach the charge of murder to themselves. Fears for their own security, therefore, he said, operated at first to stay such a proceeding; but Madge had insisted, that if it were done quickly, meaning as soon as sleep had overpowered her tired guest, the body might be securely removed, and buried early in the morning, and he have no opportunity of telling any tales to their disadvantage. This, he said, they had, at length, resolved to attempt, when they found that the object they had let into the house had made the discovery they dreaded, and had actually escaped from the house through the window. His flight, he observed, had been found out somewhat sooner than it might otherwise have happened, in consequence of Madge, disappointed by his damp clothes not being left for her to dry, as had been agreed on between them, having adventured to open

the door of his room. The fear, he continued, which this event occasioned to them, induced them to desert the house on the following day, having previously interred the body in a hole which they dug for it in the kitchen, and the next night they pulled the cottage down. Finding they could do it without being interrupted, they, in the end, removed the materials of the house to a distant part, and gave up their former situation for ever.

The particulars, as he related them, Medgwin observed, had been communicated to him by a letter from his father, for the truth of which he could vouch, as they had been confirmed, in repeated instances, by conversations he had since had with smugglers who were in the secret.

The artless manner in which the narrative had been uttered, convinced Osrick that it was not the design of the other to deceive him, though he resolved, notwithstanding,

withstanding, to make farther enquiries into the affair, as he had now a clue to direct them, by applying to the officers of the customs, to know if any person had been wounded in the way and at the time stated, as soon as he could make it convenient to himself, after he had reached England.

Osrick now related to Medgwin the greater part of what had befallen him on the night he had visited his father's cottage; but found, though he was not unacquainted with old Grassingly, that he could give him no information regarding the copse; but when he stated to him the surprise he had suffered, and which had induced him and Belmont to undertake the nocturnal excursion that had produced such alarming disasters to both, he burst into an immoderate fit of laughter, from which, as he recovered, he exclaimed—"Shiver my hulk! what, the mountain ghost has alarmed you too! Many a poor devil have I scared by the same

same means, and some, I warrant, have scarcely got rid of their fright even to this day."

Osrick begged of him to explain himself.

"It was an invention of my father," said he, still laughing heartily, "and merry enough it has occasionally made us!"

"What was an invention of your father?"

"Why the ghost, to be sure!" he replied, with laughter still more increased.

"Is the fellow mad?" angrily remarked Osrick.

"Let me have my laugh out," said he, "and I'll tell you."

Perceiving the clouds of displeasure to be gathering on the Lieutenant's brow, he observed—"The hill, on which you beheld the phantom, is but a short distance from that part of the coast where the smugglers occasionally run their goods; that is, receive and bear them away.

away from the boats that land them. While thus employed, they had been often subjected to disagreeable interruptions; and my father, as I told you, invented the ghost, to keep people of a night away from that hill, that he and his colleagues might have it to themselves. The way he managed it was this—he dug a hole in the earth, deep enough for two or three people even to stand upright and conceal themselves in, over which he placed a sliding door, thickly covered with turf, which he could move and remove at pleasure. He then formed a figure of wood, and dressed it in women's apparel, giving it the head of a skeleton; and this figure, he or any one could raise from the hole in the ground, by the contrivance he had also invented for working it, with but very little difficulty, and return it, and conceal the opening through which it had appeared, with as little chance of being discovered. A veil to cover the skeleton head, was an after-thought; it was adopted

ed from a suggestion of my own; and which, by means of phosphorus, was easily kindled, and consumed by a bluish flame. The smugglers soon found their account in this *ghost*, for it spread such terror in the neighbourhood, that none but themselves had the courage to visit the hill, which is called White-hawk, for a great length of time after a few persons had been frightened there, but in the day-time. The story of the *White-hawk woman* was rumoured about in all quarters, and numbers of people then recollected to have heard, that some poor female had been decoyed thither by her seducer, and murdered in that quarter, many years before, whose ghost, therefore, it *certainly* was that appeared there, to divulge the name of the bloody assassin, and to demand christian burial for her bones, the moment any one should have the courage to address her, and then listen to her story. Not a soul, however, that would undertake this task, was to be found. You stumbled

stumbled upon her *ghostship* by accident. The smugglers, you know, were running their goods that night, though that, fortunately for the smugglers, did not happen to be the case the night after, or their secret, perhaps, you might have found out, much against their interest and consent."

Osrick could scarcely accredit what he heard. The other, however, in the end, so convinced him of the truth of what he had stated, that he could not avoid laughing himself, and in which Medgwin loudly accompanied him.

Osrick gave him the reward he had promised, and told him, if he found the whole of what he had narrated to be authentic, he should find him his friend in future; if not, he would act prudently in avoiding him. With this the other appeared to be well satisfied; and nothing of consequence farther passed between them.

A merchant-vessel, a brig, bound for London,

London, at length, being hailed, Osrick took leave of the Captain of the sloop, and was put on board the trader, the master of which very readily received him as a passenger, and gave him the best accommodations his ship would afford.

The wind was fair for England, and continued so until they had entered the British Channel, and Osrick once more beheld the friendly cliffs of Albion, but never with such rapture as he did at that time. The voyage, hitherto, had been exceedingly pleasant, and Osrick was quite satisfied with the treatment he had received on board the trader. Having entered the Channel; however, the weather became squally, and a tremendous gale from the north at length put it out of their power to make for the Downs.

Buffetted by the tempest for two days and as many nights, they, in the end, considered themselves in safety, being off the Sussex Coast, where the rude breath of Boreas had less power on their tempest-

tost

tost bark. Confident hopes, in fact, had been entertained of safely riding out the gale, when the wind suddenly veered to the south-west, and became more violent than before.

To reach the Downs now became their sole object; but they soon found that they were too far to the westward, and too close in for the land to clear Beachy-Head. The sea now rolled mountains high, and, in this dreadful situation, the wind sprung the foremast, which instantly went by the board.

This disaster was terrible, and a leak, which gained upon them so fast that the pumps were rendered useless, soon after, menaced nothing less than watery graves to the whole of them.

One vessel they saw founder to the windward, and two others only escaped similar fates by running ashore, where they had been presently dashed to pieces by the breakers.

It was now evening. The sun was fast declining in the west, and the stormy horrors were momentarily increasing.

Osrick, regardless of danger, had made himself as useful as possible, and had repeatedly obtained the thanks of the Captain for his conduct, and who now addressed him, telling him, that to keep the ship above water many hours longer, though they had lightened her of the greater part of her cargo, would be impossible.

Osrick was deeply shocked at the information. To perish, after the numerous perils he had survived, almost within sight of his father's door, was dreadful. "Can nothing be done to save the vessel?" said he.

"Nothing," replied the other: "Our best chance will be in running her ashore—though, from what we have witnessed, even that doesn't promise to save our lives!"

"Do

"Do what you can for the best," said Osrick, in agony, "and to Providence we must leave the rest."

"THE WRECK,

the last which we distinguished on the strand," said the Captain, "has totally disappeared; and I much question if a soul was preserved."

"We may be more fortunate," replied Osrick, "and the people on the shore have increased in number to render their assistance."

"The breakers are too heavy," he replied, "for their assistance to be effectual. However, it's the only chance we have; and, sink or swim, it will avail us not being downhearted; so now for the experiment!"

The little crew, consisting of seven men and a boy, were presently apprised of their Captain's determination; they had long perceived that such must be their ultimate resource,

resource, and were fully prepared for the measure. The helmsman now brought the bow of the vessel for the shore. Anxiety and trembling expectation floated in every mind, though courage to endure the worst in every heart predominated. The moment thus pregnant with the future was awfully impressive; they were on the brink of eternity, and from which nothing short of a miracle promised to save them. As the ship, almost buried in the foaming surges, was rapidly driven towards the shore, Osrick bestowed a thought on his father and his beloved Alethea. Death appeared inevitable—he shrunk not, however, from the danger—for if Heaven had so ordained that he was to perish, as a Christian he would meet his fate. At length the ship struck! The main-mast was shivered in pieces by the shock; the crash was tremendous; several of the seamen were swept away by the waves, and even hope deserted the survivors!

Soon after the fall of the main-mast, the

the bottom of the ship bilged, and the angry element rushing in, in an instant filled every vacancy, and death and horror held dominion.

Osrick, and two or three of the half-drowned seamen, now clung to a fragment of the disjointed mast. Frequently were they dashed with violence on the strand, and as often were they dragged back by the receding force of the billows.

The people on the shore hurled ropes towards them, but scarcely any of them had strength and resolution sufficient to attempt to avail themselves of the proffered assistance; for, to lose the hold they had, and miss the rope, was to die!

Dreadfully bruised, exhausted in the last degree, a rope, at length, reached Osrick; he caught it, but it slipped through his almost nerveless hand, and he thereby lost the fragment of the mast which previously supported him. His fate was now at its crisis; he was sinking, never again to rise, when a second rope fell

fell full within his grasp, and which, by a desperate effort, that despair, mingled with hope, empowered him at the instant to make, he twined round his arm. The exertions of those employed in the humane act of saving the drowning crew, now operated in his favour, and, after a few more painful struggles, he was dragged

ON SHORE.

Though unable to stand, or even to hold up his head, so near destruction had he been, yet did his senses not desert him. His mental feelings, therefore, when he found himself snatched from the waves, and his feet once more resting on British ground, are not to be defined. His heart beat with rapture, though, from the bruises he had received, every fibre quivered with pain; and his stomach seemed bursting with the brine he had been compelled to swallow. The position in which his

his preservers placed him, for they had been accustomed to such proceedings, soon relieved him, however, of the latter; and in the arms of several of them, he was, soon after, borne away.

To a house, not far distant from the spot where the distressing catastrophe had occurred, they presently conveyed, undressed, and, between blankets only, laid him on a warm bed, having previously made him drink some weak warm spirits and water. Chirurgical assistance was then procured, and the necessary remedies for his recovery administered.

The care taken of him had the desired effect, and all dangerous symptoms soon vanished.

For two days, however, he was confined to his bed, during which he was informed that only two men, besides himself, had been saved from the wreck, the captain of the vessel being of the number of the sufferers.

On the third day he was well enough to quit his bed, and the first use he made of his time, next to the prayer of pious thankfulness and gratitude he owed the Omniscient for his preservation, was to dispatch a messenger with a letter for his father, as he found that he was within twenty miles of Somerton Lodge.

This day he made known his name to the people of the house, who were no strangers to his family; and a bill on his father, for an hundred pounds, without hesitation, was cashed in the neighbourhood.

His next object, then, was liberally to reward those who had rescued him from a watery grave, with a promise of future benefits; and among whom he discovered, with a surprise that the reader may well imagine, as they were severally introduced to him, the very man whom he had overtaken in his journey to Southampton, and from whom he had received

the

the letter that had been delivered to him after he had embarked for Monte Video, at Portsmouth.

The man, at first, appeared confounded at beholding him, but Osrick soon contrived the means of speaking with him in private.

His confusion had now evaporated, and he had assumed an air of a kind of modest confidence, that gave Osrick no unfavourable opinion of his character.

He acknowledged to have written the letter signed *F. M.* and to Osrick's enquiry, if they were really the initials of his name, he replied in the affirmative, his name being Francis Medgwin, and by which Osrick soon discovered that he was the father of his seafaring acquaintance, Ben Bundle; and to the full and satisfactory extent, he, in the end, confirmed all that Ben had related, and appeared thankful for the information which was communicated to him in return, that his son was well.

The fear of being apprehended, he said, as he knew that there were several Exchequer writs issued against him, had prevented his visiting Osrick at Southampton; but that poverty, and the high opinion that every one had of his character, whom he questioned about it, had, in the end, induced him to send the letter, and to which he had been greatly disappointed in not receiving any answer, as he knew not, until some weeks after, that the regiment to which Osrick belonged had quitted England.

Osrick dismissed this man with ten guineas, desiring him to call at the Lodge in a few days, when the sum should be augmented to fifty, and after that, he told him, he would endeavour more essentially to serve both him and his son.

With tears of gratitude Medgwin left him, promising to wait on him at the Lodge, as he had been directed.

Osrick's next care was to order that the poor seamen who had been saved, should

have every comfort that their situation required; and that decent interments should, at his expence, be given to the remains of those that had perished. On learning that the body of the Captain had not then been picked up, he offered a reward of ten guineas to those that should find it, which doubled the exertions that were made for that purpose, and which, the same afternoon, were crowned with success.

To the owners of the ship and cargo, in London, he transmitted an account of the catastrophe; nor did he forget to announce his own return to the war office.

The messenger dispatched with the letter to his father reappeared before evening, but he brought no answer back. He had seen no person, he said, but a servant, to whom he had given the letter, who told him that Mr. Somerton was from home; but whether he was merely taking a walk or a ride for exercise or pleasure, or

had left the Lodge for any length of time, he had forgot to ask!

Osrick had expected that his father would scarcely have had the patience to wait until the next day to see him, when he had told him in the letter he should be at the Lodge, and had really expected to see him with the return of the messenger; and in momentary expectation was he of beholding him, throughout the remainder of the evening, but he came not.

Osrick had recovered a trunk, which he brought from Buenos Ayres, containing wearing apparel, from the wreck, so that his inconvenience, in that particular, had been removed; and by daybreak on the following morning, he was proceeding, in a post-chaise and four horses, for the Lodge; and after a journey of about three hours, was

THE STRANGER AT HOME.

For miles before he reached the house, had

had Osrick expected to see his father; and his anxiety had arrived at the most painful height, when the chaise halted at the door, and he had yet seen nothing of him.

To the rap at the door, it was some time before any one attended. It was, at length, answered by an aged domestic, to whom the Lodge was generally left in care, in the absence of the family.

"God be praised!" said the old man, as a tear glistened in his eye, and he discovered Osrick. "I thought I knew the hand-writing, but I feared to hope 'twas your's—God be praised that I was not mistaken!"

"Where is my father?" impatiently inquired Osrick.

"He has been at Bath some weeks," replied Arnold, for that was his name, "but I expect him home to-morrow, or the day after at farthest, therefore I did not send off your letter, for I know now that the one which was brought here yesterday was from yourself—Heaven knows

how I trembled, when I looked upon the writing!"

"When did you hear from your master?"

"Three days ago."

"Is he well?"

"He says he is better than he has been, but Miss Alethea Castleby——"

"What of Alethea?" interrupted Osrick, with a quickness of enquiry that startled the old man.

"It was on her account," he replied, "that my master went to Bath."

"Is Alethea ill then?"

The old man shook his head, but said nothing.

Osrick had not the power, at that time, to interrogate him farther. He strove, however, to conceal his emotions, and having discharged the postboy, he followed old Arnold into the house.

"How long," said Osrick, as soon as he could summon resolution sufficient to utter the words, "how long has Alethea been ill?"

"Ever since she heard of your death."

Osrick's

Osrick's heart was bursting.

"Pray don't look so sorrowful," said Arnold; "she may get better, now you are come back."

"Sit down, Arnold," said Osrick, as they entered a room together.

Arnold did so, but Osrick paced the apartment in agony unutterable.

"How long," at length, in tremulous accents, he inquired, "has Alethea been at Bath?"

"About five weeks."

"Was she very ill when she went?"

"Very ill."

"But she got better afterwards?"

"No—worse."

Osrick was again silent—tears moistened his eyes, and he turned his face towards the window, that Arnold might not notice them. When he had again acquired firmness to speak, he farther questioned the old man; but the answers he obtained contributed more to increase than diminish his anxiety.

"Who accompanied Alethea to Bath?" said he.

"My master and mistress, and Mr. and Mrs. Stokes."

"How is your mistress?"

"Not very well, I believe, she grieves so much at beholding the unhappiness of those about her."

"Did not Miss Stokes go with them?"

"I believe not—but she is no longer Miss Stokes, but Mrs. Blyfield—she was married just before the news of your death arrived."

"From whom was that news received?"

"A Captain Dreadnought has been here—though that you were missing was previously announced in the papers—but the Captain, as he and all of us believed, confirmed your death."

"Was Dreadnought well?"

"Yes, he seemed pretty well, but very melancholy on your account."

"Do you know where the Captain is now?"

"I believe

"I believe he's at Bath too.—I did hear that he was gone thither, with a young lady, a relation of Miss Castleby."

"A relation of Alethea!"

"I was told so."

"Do you know her name?"

"If I am not mistaken, her name is Fortescue."

"Strange that I should never hear that she had a relation of that name living!"

"Nobody knew it, I believe, till of late, though they say she is very rich. She came here once in a carriage with Captain Dreadnought, and it is said that the Captain intends to marry her."

"Impossible!"

"I wouldn't say so, for when I saw them, they looked *marvellously* fond of each other."

Osrick was puzzled to comprehend who Miss Fortescue could be, that the Captain could so suddenly have become enamoured with; but the distress he was in on

Alethea's account would not permit his thoughts long to dwell on that subject.

"Has anything," said he, "besides what you have already mentioned, of any consequence, occurred in the family, during my absence?"

"Yes, Mr. Belmont——"

"Belmont! what of Belmont?"

"My master sent him a challenge."

"Your master!"

"Yes."

"Well, what then?"

"Mr. Belmont sent him a letter in return, which reconciled my master and mistress, who had violently disagreed, upon some point or other, but a short time before."

"And what then?"

"Why, my master and mistress were happy afterwards, as if there had been cross words between them; though I never knew what it was that had caused their

their difference; and, as it was no concern of mine, I never endeavoured to find it out."

"And Belmont——"

"Oh! he was never suffered to enter the Lodge afterwards, though he sent several letters to make his peace here; but, however, he could never succeed. Miss Castleby was pestered with letters from him also."

"Did she receive them?"

"Yes, but she sent them all back unopened."

"How are you aware of that?"

"Because Mr. Stokes, when I happened to be by, told my master so."

"And where is Belmont at present?"

"I believe he is at Bath too; but he's withered to the bone—he's nothing like the man he used to be; and his physician thinks he'll die, unless Miss Alethea will consent to forgive him; for I suppose you heard how he insulted her, in forcing her away

away from her friends at Chichester, though I don't know the particulars of the affair."

"Villain!"

"I never had any great opinion of him myself—and poor Miss Castleby would tremble so, that it used to be painful, dear heart, to see her, if she but heard his name."

"And he's at Bath too, you say?"

"I understand so—I cannot be certain."

"Order me a post-chaise and four. I'll set off for Bath instantly."

"You'll meet the family on the road then, Sir, for they'll certainly be here to-morrow, or the day after at farthest, according to the letter I have received; but in my opinion, they'll be here before to-morrow night."

A loud rap now called Arnold to the door. On returning, he exclaimed, with visible satisfaction—"Heaven be praised, here's

at least! My master, and the whole family, and Captain Dreadnought, and Miss Fortescue, and Mr. and Mrs. Stokes, and I don't know who, will all be here this evening—for here's Nicholas, who has travelled all night, come on before, to order every thing to be in readiness for their reception.—Bless my heart, how happy they will all be, Sir, to see you!"

Nicholas was another servant on Mr. Somerton's establishment.

"Did you ask Nicholas how Alethea was?"

"I did; he said she was no worse than she had been for the last week or two, nor did he think her any better; but in a very short time now, you will see her yourself; and I am much mistaken if your presence doesn't do her more service than all the doctors united, or all the hot and cold waters in the kingdom could."

Osrick

Osrick was gladdened by the old man's words, but still the most fearful apprehensions gave agony to his heart.

"Did you tell Nicholas, Arnold, that I was here?—if not, I must beg of you to be silent on that subject for the present."

"Bless your honour, I told him you were here, the very first thing I acquainted him with, and happy enough it made him, and he's now waiting in the passage for you to grant him permission to tell you so himself."

Nicholas was admitted into the room, and, as Arnold had stated, his spirits were, indeed, at a happy pitch, in finding his young master so unexpectedly at home.

Osrick asked him a number of questions about Alethea and the family, but his replies were not more consolatory than Arnold's had proved. His father, he told him, was almost as ill as Alethea. The old gentleman, he said, shunned all company, would lock himself up in a room,

for

for hours, from whence, as he would again make his appearance, his pale face and swollen eyes but too clearly proved that he passed the whole of such temporary seclusions in weeping. In Mrs. Somerton's and Alethea's presence, he would endeavour to appear resigned; but the grief that preyed upon his heart was but too visible to all of them, and which gradually undermined his health, and emaciated his frame. Sometimes his tears would gush forth, in the presence of his friends, when he would abruptly leave them, and such paroxysms of sorrow had occasionally dreadfully afflicted Alethea and his wife.

Osrick shed tears at the distressing narrative, nor could Arnold listen to the words he heard with dry eyes.

"There has been sad work in the family, sure enough!" ejaculated the old man, "but the storm's over, and, under Heaven, I trust, it will be all sunshine now!"

Belmont,

Belmont, Osrick found, was really at Bath, and was very ill there, and that it had been partly on his account that Alethea had been removed from the place so soon, as Mr. and Mrs. Stokes had originally intended to remain with her for at least three months there, that she might receive the full benefits, if any could be derived therefrom, of the Bath waters.

The sable livery of Nicholas, Arnold being in a drab morning frock, at first struck Osrick, and he now enquired for whom the family was in mourning? Nicholas smiled, and scarcely knew what answer to return, though Osrick was soon apprised that the mournful costume had been assumed in consequence of his supposed death.

"Thank Heaven," exclaimed Arnold, "the gloomy trappings will now be cast aside, for my master and mistress, and all the family, look frightfully melancholy in

in them. I shall never like a black coat again as long as I live!"

Osrick, at the moment, recollected the words of his esteemed benefactress at Buenos Ayres—"The tears," she had said, "which shall flow on your account, shall be wiped away by the cause of them. Their days of mourning," alluding to his friends, "shall have an end ere they are well begun; and their happiness shall be rendered the more gratefully permanent, by the gloom which had enveloped it;" and fervently did he mentally put up a prayer, that her words, in their amplest sense, might be verified.

Osrick now begged of Arnold and Nicholas not to let his return, at that time, be made known to any other individuals of the family, as he did not wish that his friends should be too abruptly surprised by his presence—"When my father arrives, Arnold," said he, "give him the letter you received from me yesterday, but do it privately. You can call him aside,

aside, by telling him you have something to communicate for his ear alone, and which, you know, will be speaking strictly true; but be sure that Alethea, nor your mistress, nor any of the ladies, notice your proceeding; and, I trust, you have skill enough, in the best manner, to execute the remainder of your mission, and in which you must, in a great degree, be regulated by circumstances. My father, at first, cannot suppose me to be in the house, and, therefore, do not you too suddenly undeceive him. In the interim, you must secrete me in one of the rooms in which there is the least probability of my being interrupted; but let it be one from which I may obtain a partial view of what is going on, that is when the family arrives, for I am impatient to be blest in once more beholding them."

Arnold promised to be attentive to his instructions, and both to be as secret as he advised.

Heavily

Heavily passed this day with Osrick; the minutes, he almost imagined, had been lengthened to hours, to torture him, and every hour was an age.

The arrival of other servants, however, about five o'clock in the afternoon, announced

THE WELCOME CAVALCADE

to be at hand; and soon after the family coach, the carriage of Mr. and Mrs. Stokes, and the three post-chaises and four, with a suitable number of outriders, halted at the Lodge.

The sable habiliments of those in the respective carriages, and the corresponding gloom of the livery of the servants, gave a mournful appearance to the scene, and which, being heightened by the serious and solemn demeanour of the collective assemblage, might well have occasioned the supposition, in a stranger, that

that the whole of them had but just returned from a funeral.

Osrick was so situated, by the contrivance of Arnold, as to have a full view of the entrance-hall, where the several parties were to alight, by keeping the door of a small parlour, in which he was, on the jar, and which was at too great a distance from them to endanger his being seen, or to cause any suspicions to arise it was not his desire to excite.

From the first carriage he saw draw up to the door, alighted his father; but how altered in appearance since the time of their parting! His ruddy countenance had assumed a sallow complexion, and his whole figure seemed fast sinking under the fell incroachments of decay. Osrick's heart throbbed with agony thus to behold him; and how gladly would he have shewn himself, to offer those affectionate congratulations which the first sight of him inspired! but he dared not; his

tears,

tears, therefore, were shed in private, and known to no one but himself.

His father now assisted Mrs. Somerton from the carriage; a gentleman followed her, whom Osrick knew not, but from his supporting Constance, as she alighted, he rightly concluded him to be Mr. Blyfield.

This carriage now moved off, and that of Mr. Stokes appeared, from which descended that gentleman and his good lady; but sensibly indeed was Osrick affected, when he saw them support from it the idol of his thoughts, his dearly beloved Alethea. Ill and languid she did indeed appear; the roses of the cheeks, and even the vermeil of the lips, were gone, and dimmed was the lustre of her eyes. A faintness seemed to overpower her senses as she reached the hall; she complained of a swimming in her head, and begged of those that supported not to let her go. A chair was then procured, in which they placed her, and then, with anxious tenderness,

tenderness, they damped, with some volatile essence, her temples, but it did not speedily revive her.

Osrick's soul, as he beheld this ceremony, had nearly burst its mortal confines—he gasped for breath—he believed her dying—his eyes became fixed, and his feet were rivetted to the floor. The moment was too pregnant with anguish to be described.

The dulcet sounds of her voice at length shot hope to his heart, and he breathed again.

"I am better," faintly articulated Alethea; "I am better now, and with your assistance, my beloved friends, I will attempt to walk up stairs."

Mr. and Mrs. Stokes, followed by Mr. and Mrs. Blyfield, and a pretty nymph, whom Osrick was convinced he had seen before, but where he could not recollect, and who had alighted from the carriage after Alethea, now supported the lovely invalid away.

His

His father and Mrs. Somerton still continued in the hall, to welcome those in the third carriage to the Lodge, and from which, with mingled sensations of surprise and satisfaction, Osrick now saw descend his esteemed friend Dreadnought, and the interesting heroine of Monte Video, Clara!

Surely, thought Osrick, Clara cannot be the Miss Fortescue that Arnold talked of! but then he remembered that the old man had said that Miss Fortescue was a near relation of Alethea, and that circumstance at once expelled the growing supposition.

Dreadnought and Clara, and Mr. and Mrs. Somerton, now disappeared, the other carriages only containing the female attendants of the several parties.

The hall was now deserted, and Osrick became impatient once more to behold Arnold. He was on the rack of suspense respecting Alethea, and one word to have informed him that she was somewhat

more revived, would have rendered him comparatively happy.

He doubted not, however, but Arnold would attend to the instructions he had given him; nor was he deceived—for ere his father had joined the company in the drawing-room, the old man called him aside, and, in a whisper, begged to say a few words to him in private, as he had something very particular to communicate to him.

There was an appearance of hilarity in the old man's features, such as had not of late been very often seen there, as he urged his request, and which his master noticed with

SURPRISE,

but said nothing, merely waving his hand for him to descend the stairs, which he accordingly did, and Mr. Somerton followed him.

Osrick saw them cross the hall, and enter

enter an apartment which opened into it. His heart palpitated with increased violence, for he saw, by Arnold's manner, that he was about to fulfil the mission with which he was entrusted.

Having entered the room, Arnold closed the door.

"Now, Arnold," said Mr. Somerton, "what is the momentous business you have to disclose to me? Your countenance indicates that you suppose your communication will give me pleasure, but I fear you will find yourself mistaken."

"I hope not, Sir," said Arnold.

"But to the point," exclaimed his master, "for I have but little time to waste with you."

"I have heard news, Sir, from abroad."

"What news?"

"That my young master is supposed to be living."

"Impossible! Blockhead, how dare you wound my feelings, by touching on that subject?"

"I would not have done so if I had not had good reasons for my conduct."

"Begone! and trouble me no more!"

"Pray hear me!"

Mr. Somerton, with a frown, now made for the door himself.

"Hold, Sir!" exclaimed Arnold, "your son lives!—upon my soul, I deceive you not!"

Struck by the singular energy of his words, and the anguished firmness of his manner, his master returned. An indescribable sensation shot through him at the moment, and, tremblingly, he seated himself, and wiped the dew, which the force of his feelings had raised there, from his venerable brow.

"Your son lives!" repeated Arnold, "and will shortly be in England!"

"Arnold, you have pierced me to the soul with your words!—What is it you would say? this suspense is terrible; but if you have presumed to raise hopes in me, that, in the sequel, you cannot realize,

lize, you will have shortened my days."

"When did I tell you a lie?"

"Never."

"Your son is in England!"

Mr. Somerton started; a burning glow was at his heart—his lips quivered, as he essayed to speak, but no sounds passed them. The recollected impossibility, as he imagined, of his son's being alive, however, presently gave a new turn to his

AGONY,

and a frown dangerously menacing contracted his brow. Arnold observed it, and produced the letter.

"Do you know that hand-writing, Sir?" said he. His master snatched the paper from his hand, and the recollection of the well-known characters almost took away his senses.

The letter was rent in many places, as,

in the delirium of the moment, he attempted to open it.

" My boy lives !" he exclaimed, as the paper dropped from his hands, and he involuntarily sank on his knees. " Thank God !" he continued, as in

PIOUS GRATITUDE

he clasped his hands together, and raised his eyes to Heaven—" thank God ! my boy lives, and I shall once more behold him ! Oh, thou all-wise, all good, and great Eternal ! deign to accept the prayer of thankfulness from thy humbled servant, whom thou thus preservest from affliction ! In thee I trusted, and thou hast poured the balm of gladness into my aching heart, and dissipated my woe. To thee must I ascribe every blessing I enjoy, and, oh ! teach me how to pour forth my grateful adoration in the way that will be most acceptable to thee, and eternally

nally to glorify thy name! Oh! Osrick, my beloved son, when wilt thou receive thy parent's embrace, and cheer him with thy presence?"

THE AFFECTIONATE MEETING

could be delayed no longer, for his last words reached Osrick in his concealment; he therefore rushed into the room, where Arnold had just raised his master from his devout attitude, and his father, the next instant, sprung into his arms.

Osrick trembled universally; neither, for some time, could articulate a word; and poor old Arnold, in whom age had blunted the finer feelings of nature, was so melted by the scene that he sobbed aloud.

"My dear, dear father," at length respired Osrick, "moderate your astonishment.—The joy of beholding you is changed to grief, in the distressing emotions that my appearance excites. Be

calm, be composed, or you will make me miserable."

"My boy! my dear boy! I am happy now!—very, very happy!" ejaculated the affectionate parent, as a shower of tears relieved his oppressed senses, and his head reclined on the shoulder of his son. "I shall not quit the world in sorrow now, for my child will close my eyes, and preserve my family from fading—my name from being lost. Heavenly powers! grant—oh! grant me strength to bear the tide of rapture that now gushes in upon me, and nearly overwhelms my soul in a sea of bliss!"

As the first gust of joyful surprise began to subside, and happiness less enervating to predominate, the door of the room was suddenly opened, and Mrs. Somerton entered. She shrieked at beholding Osrick, and would have fallen to the floor, had he not timely rushed forward and saved her.

The confusion this event occasioned,

and

and the cause of it, was soon communicated to those above stairs; and presently after, Mr. and Mrs. Stokes, Mr. and Mrs. Blyfield, Captain Dreadnought and Clara, in rapid succession, entered the room.

The bliss-fraught scene that ensued may well be conceived. Mrs. Somerton, who having missed her husband, and fearing that the fatigues of the journey might have made him ill, and had arrived there in her search for him, was speedily recovered from the alarming effects of the surprise that had seized her, and her husband was almost wild with delight. Clara shed tears of gratitude, as she again beheld the preserver of her honour; and Dreadnought shook him by the hand, with a fervour that feelingly evinced how deeply and sincerely he rejoiced to see him. Mrs. Blyfield and her parents, were scarcely less transported in beholding him, and the first tranquil moment was embraced to introduce him to the husband of Constance.

There was still one dear object wanting, and with visible anxiety and distress did Osrick occasionally look towards the door, with the fervent hope of perceiving her.

What was passing in his mind was easily read by almost all present.

"My poor Alethea," said Mrs. Stokes, "a little overcome by the fatigues of her journey, though we only travelled a distance of forty miles to-day, has fallen into a sleep, and I hope it will prove a refreshing one, on the bed, and, of course, is ignorant of your return; nor would I wish her to be apprized of it too suddenly, as such a surprise, in the very weak state she is in, may operate unfavourably."

"Has she been, or is she, at this time, very ill?" enquired Osrick, with a tender anxiety he could not conceal.

"Her malady," replied Mrs. Stokes, "is far beyond the art of a physician to remove!"

"My dear Madam," said Osrick, "you

"you much alarm me!—Is she, indeed, so very ill?"

"The malady that affects her is seated in the mind," said she; "perhaps *your* return, and a little cheerful company, may now be conducive to her recovery."

Osrick seemed a little confused, as Mrs. Stokes strongly emphasized the word *your*, indicating that she was no stranger to his passion. Not appearing to notice his embarrassment, however, she continued—"Though I assure you, Osrick, she has been, and is at this time exceedingly weak and ill."

"And yet," observed he, "you have ventured to leave her alone!"

"You might have spared me that reproach," said she, smiling, "until you had ascertained that I was deserving of it. Annette is with her, and a kind, good girl she is; and Alethea is much attached to her."

"Annette!" said Osrick, "surely I have heard that name before!"

"To be sure you have, my dear boy," exclaimed his father; "it was you that introduced her to my acquaintance. She was with Mrs. Manderson when you left us. You remember the unfortunate fate of her parents, the effect of the inhuman proceedings of Puffarden? Alethea, with the consent of her aunt, and at my recommendation, engaged Annette as her attendant, now many months ago, and both, I believe, are perfectly satisfied with each other."

It now occurred to Osrick, that Annette it was that he had seen descend from the carriage after Alethea, though, as she was grown taller in his absence, he could not immediately recall his knowledge of her to memory.

"And where is Puffarden now?" enquired Osrick.

"I can scarcely tell you," replied his father, "for I have not had the misfortune to meet with him since I forbade him my house; though I understand that he

he is still to be found in the neighbourhood."

The conversation now became lively and general, sorrow appeared to have been discarded the Lodge, and Osrick felt himself much easier, as he found that no very serious apprehensions were entertained for the fate of Alethea.

Osrick had removed with the company into the drawing-room, but when Alethea was announced to have been refreshed by the short sleep she had enjoyed, and was preparing to join their party, he, accompanied by Dreadnought only, removed to another room.

The Captain, when alone with him, with an effervescence of manner which strongly evinced his attachment to him, again assured him how happily his return had been felt by him.

"I can tell you," said he, "that your death was regarded by me as certain; and I even went so far as to tell your father that, from indisputable authority, I had

had heard that you had been taken by the enemy, and died of your wounds at Buenos Ayres; as I thought even that was less calculated to torture him, than that which I really feared to be the truth. In the name of wonder, how did you escape? for that you were forced from the ruins by the robbers, I am certain."

Osrick here gave him an account of every thing that had happened to him; and Dreadnought, when he had finished the eventful story; surprised him, by telling him that the miniature he had lost was safe in his possession.

"In return for your narrative, now," said he, "I'll give you an account of all that has occurred to me; and I promise you I have some astonishing circumstances to relate, since our unfortunate separation, and with the whole of which you, at present, must be unacquainted."

DREADNOUGHT'S NARRATIVE,

therefore, was immediately commenced; but

but the reader being already apprized of the circumstances that took place in the ruins, prior to the military being assembled in the dome-surmounted apartment, with the determination of examining that cave of horrors which opened into it, we shall take up the Captain's words only from that period.

"The shocking figure in the distance," he continued, "and the singular kind of noise that we heard, was far from being pleasant to any of us; however, we resolved to penetrate and unravel the hidden mysteries of the place, and a most dreadfully disgusting task it proved.

"Heaps of dead bodies, some in the last stage of decay, and some that appeared to have been but recently deprived of life, we had there to behold, forming one horrible and confused heap, in the centre of which was the ghastly figure we had before partially distinguished, and which was the same that you had previously described to me.

"This

"This object, we found, was a corpse of no common dimensions, and which had been fixed, with large nails and hoops of iron, to a post or pillar that was a support to the arch that separated it from the cells above. The lambent fire that played about the body was the ineffectual glare of the glow-worm, which probably had generated there, rendering terrifically visible what it had not the power to consume.

"The fluttering sounds we heard, we found, proceeded from a wretched object, whose spirit had not then left him, but who scarcely survived our discovery a minute. You may very easily suppose that our visit there was made as short as possible, and I much doubt if there were any of us that possessed the resolution to have entered it again.

"By the prisoner we had taken, and whom, by threats, we intimidated to confess all he knew of the horde, we learned, that the reeking cavern we had explored was.

was the general receptacle of their dead, and that the body fixed to the pillar had been formerly one of the banditti, but who had been put to death, and his remains so disposed of, a great many months before, for aiming to destroy their chief. The terrible object that had so surprised you on a former occasion, was also another of the gang, who had been deeply wounded for betraying symptoms of insubordination, and committed to the cave to die, just before you had afforded him an opportunity of stalking from it. Being met, however, by several of the miscreants in the vaulted passage of the iron gate, he had been turned back, and soon after dispatched by them.

"The villain from whom I gained my information, also confessed that he had been your guide to the road which led to Monte Video, after you had parted from the Guaderios; that it had been his intention to conduct you to the ruins, not then supposing that you knew any thing of

of the place, had not you timely prevented him; and that, on your giving him his liberty, he had met one of the Pampas, armed with a fusee, who, happily, was not successful in the subsequent attempt that was made on your life.

"The sounds of voices and footsteps, that had at first induced us to suppose the Pampas were returning, we found were occasioned by a large party of the inhabitants of Monte Video, that the magistrates there had sent to our assistance; those we left at the ruins, busily employed in demolishing the place; and, though spiritless on your account, we retraced our steps to the town, taking our prisoner with us, and also the old man, who, even at that time, was in the agonies of death.

"For him I procured a decent apartment, and sent our surgeon to him; but the former I committed to the custody of the police officers, telling them, that on the following day I would interrogate him.

him farther. This I did; and on my describing the trap, through which you had descended, he confirmed my fears of your having fallen into the hands of the Pampas, and mentioned your death as inevitable.

"There were many such traps in the ruins, he said, as that through which you had passed; but they had not been formed by the Pampas, they had found them there, he said, when they discovered the arches, many years before, and of the origin of which he could give no other account, nor could any one that I subsequently questioned on the subject, than that they were supposed to have been the foundations of a castle, or state prison, centuries ago.

"Clara, this day, I found was considerably recovered, though I deferred seeing her until the day after; but to the old man, for whom I had provided such attentions and accommodations as his case required, I was summoned by the surgeon,

geon, who told me that he had expressed an urgent desire to speak with his deliverer, and the deliverer of his niece; for the surgeon had apprized him of those circumstances, and who then requested of me to visit his patient as speedily as possible, or I should not find him alive.

"I accordingly accompanied him to the sick man's room. I found him quite sensible, though evidently at the door of death. Something that he wished to communicate, and yet feared to do it, I saw increased his agonies, and which I did not hesitate to mention to him, urging him to unburthen his mind to me, and despair not of Heaven's forgiveness.

"Penitence for his crimes was visible in the scalding tears that started from his sunken eyes, as he yielded to my request. I was with him about two hours, and in disjointed sentences, though perfectly coherent when connected, I arrived at the source of his affliction; and of which, that you may the sooner comprehend the

nature

nature of it, I will draw for you the correct outline in my own way.

"In the first place, I must inform you that his name was Grassingly; but I am inclined to suppose, though you mentioned it not to me, that you must have recognized his person in the ruins.

"This Grassingly had an only sister, who married a merchant in London, of the name of Fortescue, the uncle of your Miss Castleby, he being the brother of her mother, and of the first wife of Mr. Stokes. The issue of this marriage was a daughter, the lovely creature that we rescued from the robbers, and who is, at present, with your father and friends in the drawing-room. The birth of Clara, however, terminated the life of her mother, and an unconquerable melancholy, in consequence, took possession of her father. Grassingly was a constant visitant at his house, and so attached did he appear to his brother-in-law, that, at the expiration of ten years, when his physician

cian recommended change of climate, and hinted that the atmosphere of the continent might be serviceable to his health, he accompanied him and his daughter to the south of France.

"There they continued three years, but Mr. Fortescue, deriving no benefit from his situation, at the expiration of that time, they returned to England, about three months subsequent to which, the invalid, in the arms of his daughter and brother-in-law, breathed his last.

"The sad and solemn rites being administered to his remains, the will of the deceased was opened, and the surprise of Clara you may well imagine, though grief for her father's death almost superseded the pain of every other sensation, when she found herself left totally dependant on her uncle, the whole of the immense property of her father, and which he had principally realized in trade, being bequeathed to Grassingly, with the exception of three hundred a-year only, to be

paid by him to Clara, when she had turned the age of twenty, until which time he was to provide for her in whatever way he thought best. I read your surprise. This will Grassingly confessed to me he had forged, having suborned a wretch of an attorney to his purpose, and witnesses to attest the deed; though he likewise made known to me where the genuine writings were deposited, and which he had never possessed the courage to destroy; and those writings have since fallen into my hands.

"Thus successful in his designs, he turned the greater part of the estates into cash, vesting the money, in his own name, in the funds, and then fixed his residence in a remote part of Cumberland, allowing his niece only one female attendant, a creature of his will, who was appointed to tyrannize, guard, and watch over her, scarcely allowing her to breathe the wholesome air of Heaven, and never beyond

yond the limits of an enclosed walk attached to the house.

"Though in possession of so much wealth, avarice had, at this time, so steeled his heart, that he had not the power to enjoy it; and the three hundred a-year to be allowed to Clara, when she arrived at a certain age, he now began to curse his folly for having introduced into the will; and he determined to devise means to avoid the payment of it, before the stipulated period arrived.

"In Cumberland he continued until Clara was eighteen years of age, when the people in the neighbourhood, he fancied, began to notice him with an eye of suspicion; he therefore secretly disposed of his property in that quarter, removed, and fixed his residence in that miserable house, which belonged to him, as well as the grounds thereabout, in which you and Belmont saw him.

"About three months after their arrival

val at that solitary place, the old woman, the attendant on Clara, died, and he was some little time ere he could procure another that would answer his purpose—eventually, however, he succeeded.

"In the interim, he caused a rumour to be circulated, that it was his niece who had so suddenly expired; and as the coffin-plate bore her name, and other measures were successfully adopted to aid the deception, the fallacy of the rumour was never found out.

"Clara was now literally immured from all society, and buried, as it were, alive. She was never seen by any one, her female guardian excepted, and himself.

"The fear of ultimate detection torturing him day and night, the house in which he lived was deemed too insecure for her confinement, and the subterraneous recess in the coppice was ultimately had recourse to, and to that place, by night, she was removed.

"This cave had been formed by a numerous body of smugglers, many years before it had devolved to Grassingly, by the death of his father, as a secret receptacle for their contraband effects; but by Grassingly they had been warned to abandon it, and accordingly they had done so.

"You know how the entrance to this place was fenced, to prevent access to its interior parts; and two or three men, after Clara was removed to it, Grassingly had constantly in pay, to prevent any persons from entering it.

"Accident gave you a sight of the cave. On that night Grassingly had visited it himself; and as the storm wore away, he took a general survey of the wood, which, you know, is not very extensive, to ascertain, notwithstanding the inclemency of the night, that his corrupt minions were on the *alerte*.

"He saw you on the slope of the hill as the meteor burst; and him it was that

your

your so suddenly crossing the wooden bridge, struck into the ditch, placing him knee-deep in the water only, for he did not lose his balance, and from which situation he cautiously extricated himself, unheard by and unknown to you.

"He it was that followed you into the wood; and, as his guilty fears whispered to him, that you could have nothing short of the developing of his iniquities in view, the desperation of the moment caused him to snap a pistol at your head, and which had certainly destroyed you, had not the damps of the night so penetrated the lock, that the priming only partially exploded.

"Disappointed in his intent, Grassingly still watched you; he heard you raise the horizontal door of the cave, and saw you descend the steps. His fears, he now felt, were confirmed; that you had ventured thither to discover the prison of his niece, and nothing but your death promised him security. His agents he

now searched for and found. He stated to them what had happened. They, as well as himself, he observed, would be brought to the bar of justice, if the secrets of that cave were brought to light; the real nature of which, however, none of them precisely understood. Their fears, however, were presently roused, and the offer of additional rewards for your destruction co-operated to induce them to fall in with the measure. The words you heard, as they were descending the cave, were uttered by Grassingly. The manner in which you had escaped, was very soon found out; but as the old woman who attended on Clara had seen nothing of you, it was evident that you had not penetrated to her concealment. There are several apartments in that place; the one you entered, which had a square stone, not unlike a pedestal, in its centre, had been the carousing arch of the smugglers. The stone was their makeshift for a table. The door you unbolted led to an empty vault.

vault. Some loose chains hung about the door. The smugglers had occasionally used them in securing their casks and packages, and had left them there.—It must have been the rattling of those you heard. There are two subterraneous entrances to the place, besides the horizontal door in the coppice. The paths to the latter form a kind of labyrinth; you, however, by the streaming light, contrived to reach it, though, even in the blaze of day, it requires no trifling degree of labour and perseverance to find it out.

"But, by a shorter road than you had pursued through the subterraneous passage, Grassingly and his trusty agents hoped to cut off your retreat. You know how you were subsequently attacked, when the villain missed his aim. From the stunning effects of the blow you gave him, he very soon recovered, and, with the others, proceeded across the hill, to intercept you in the road that led from the valley; but you, timely observing,

baulked their design, and totally eluded them.

"Several days were passed by Grassingly in the most horrid state of suspense. No notice that any proceedings were likely to be commenced against him reached his ears; and he was beginning to lose his apprehensions for what would follow, when you and Belmont visited him. You then but little suspected the real cause of his agitation. When you left him, he determined to remove from that part of the world, and from England, as soon as possible. He saw you discoursing with Judith, and Judith was no more permitted to enter his house. Notwithstanding he had been induced to part with large sums of money to the nefarious wretches he employed, his love of the shining ore you are aware of. He almost starved himself to save expences, and Clara fared but little better. Judith's supplies from the workhouse, he acknowledged to me, had been his chief support;

but

but in Judith, after being seen with you, he could no longer confide. Resolved upon a removal himself, and tortured to the soul lest the warrant with which he had been threatened should be served on him, he paid a penitential visit to Clara in the coppice. He confessed to her that he was sensible that he had barbarously treated her, but promised, if she would consent to accompany him to America, that the whole bulk of his fortune, at his demise, should devolve to her; and that, at the age of twenty, he would allow her six hundred a-year instead of three, and she should no longer be subjected to his controul. Though Clara did not altogether believe that he would keep his word with her, yet as any situation was better than her then present one, she started no objection to his plan. He, consequently, in a post-chaise, set off with her and her attendant the same evening, and, travelling all night, reached Dover the next day.

"Buenos Ayres, at that time, was considered as our's for ever; he, easily, therefore, obtained a passage in a vessel bound for that place, and which they all three reached in safety.

"At Buenos Ayres he intended to pass the remainder of his days, and was devising means of turning the whole of his cash in the British funds into merchandize, and he exulted in the hope that he should thereby be enabled to double his capital.

"The recapture of the place by the Spaniards, however, gave a different complexion to affairs there; and he and his niece, as you know, were made prisoners by the Pampas, as well as Clara's aged, but vile attendant, in their progress from thence for Monte Video. The latter has never since been heard of.

"You may guess with what astonishment I listened to the words of the dying man. What you had some weeks before related to me, enabled me to put several interrogations

interrogations to him respecting the coppice, all of which he satisfactorily answered. He felt, he said, that his end was approaching, and he wished to make every atonement for his crimes. The will of his brother-in-law, Archibald Fortescue, he enjoined me to deliver to his niece, Clara Fortescue, in case she lived to return to England, and if not, to Alethea Castleby, the only surviving daughter of the late Benjamin and Alethea Castleby, and who resided with a Mr. and Mrs. Stokes, of Stoke-house, in the county of Rutland, but who passed much of their time in the vicinity of Somerton Lodge, in the county of Sussex.

"He then instructed me where to find the said deed, beneath the flooring of a room, in the lone house in which you and Belmont saw him. It was this room that he always kept locked; the key of it he had deposited in the iron chest; and the key of that chest also he told me where to find."

"And have you really got the will in your possession at this time?" inquired Osrick, who, till now, in mute astonishment, had listened to his words.

"Clara has it," said he. "By virtue of that instrument, she is the inheritress of immense property; it also contains a bequest of ten thousand pounds to her cousin Alethea.

"But, to finish with Grassingly. His own property, real and personal, of all and every description whatsoever, he bequeathed to Clara. This I committed to paper for him, which he signed, and it was also signed and attested by the surgeon; and, since my return to England, I have legalized the document with the proper stamps.

"I have introduced many circumstances in my statement, to save time, which were not immediately mentioned by Grassingly, though they were the result of his confession; but I told you before I began, that I should give you the

outlines

outlines of my discoveries in my own way.

"Grassingly did not survive the day of his confession; he died about an hour after I left him. He had been nearly starved in his confinement by the robbers, and the damps of his cell had penetrated to his heart, rendering his recovery impossible. He was a sad fellow, but he died a penitent. Remorse first preyed upon his soul when he beheld his niece in the hands of those who were making horrid preparations for her execution. Peace to his manes.

"The day after Grassingly's death, I saw Clara; she was much recovered. I apprized her, in a few words, of what had happened. It was not possible that she could be much grieved at her uncle's death; but your unfortunate absence most sensibly affected her.

"She corroborated all that her uncle had related to me respecting herself. When Clara was torn from you in the

ruins, she was re-conducted to her cell, where the dead body of *Quisembo* was discovered. This event caused her to be chained to her wall of the dungeon, and determined the miscreants to murder her. They never could discover by what means you escaped. Her friend that was captured with her, meaning her uncle, Clara was now told, should first see her expire, and then be put to death himself. Their design had been unavoidably delayed by plundering expeditions, which, for many days, kept them fully employed. In the interim, the female fury Clara described to to you, only had access to her. The day that was to terminate her life, according to their calculations, at length arrived; but, happily, you and I found the means of evincing to them that they had been founded in error, and of releasing the suffering angel from her demoniac tormentors.

"To be brief, Clara revived hourly, and was in good spirits when the troops had

had orders to embark for England; and so should I, had any intelligence been gained of you; but all the means that were adopted to discover you proved ineffectual.

"A tidy girl, who had attended Clara in her illness, was easily induced to accompany her in the voyage. I had secured them a cabin to themselves in one of the best transports.

"The prisoners we had made in the ruins, I left in custody of the magistrates at Monte Video, all of whom, I doubt not, were executed.

"After narrowly escaping shipwreck, we reached England in safety. Some of the transports, however, unfortunately foundered at sea, and many a brave fellow met with a watery grave.

"Soon after my landing I obtained leave of absence; and having provided suitable lodgings for Clara, who bore the voyage charmingly, I set off for this Lodge, where I introduced myself to your

father; but I shall pass over, in silence, the effect which the communication I was compelled to make on your account had on *his* spirits, and *others* in and connected with the family.

"My next application was to an attorney in this neighbourhood, whose instructions I adopted in my visit to the lone house, and there I found what I was in quest of, agreeably to what I had been prepared to expect from the dying words of Grassingly.

"A few days after this I brought Clara to the Lodge, and introduced her to her lovely relation. The fortune, however, which Alethea had so suddenly acquired, could afford her no pleasure, for all enjoyments to her were swallowed up in your supposed loss.

"The hourly declining health of Alethea, at length occasioned her friends to remove with her to Bath. Clara accompanied her; for kindred souls and dispositions soon become sincerely attached to each other.

other. Your father and mother-in-law, who, by-the-bye, is a most amiable woman, and Mr. and Mrs. Stokes, also set off for Bath at the same time, where they were joined by Mr. and Mrs. Blyfield and your humble servant.

"But Bath could be of no service to Alethea; and if your return does not operate favourably," concluded Dreadnought, with a smile, "her case must certainly be considered as hopeless."

Osrick had now a multiplicity of questions to put to Dreadnought, but ere he could give utterance to one, his father entered the room. A tear glistened in the old gentleman's eye, which did not escape his son's notice.

"Is any thing the matter, Sir?" said he, with anxiety and alarm.

"Nothing, nothing," said his father; "Alethea is better now.—We adventured to tell her that we had received certain information that you were alive, and on your way home. At first she did not believe

lieve us; but when she found that we were actually in earnest in what we said, she swooned—but she is better now, and has retired to her chamber. I am come, therefore, my dear boy, to beg that you and the Captain will join your friends in the other room."

HILARITY

now shone in every countenance in the Lodge; the servants partook of the joy of their masters, and though all were cloathed in sables, a more cheerful assemblage of merry mourners was never beheld.

The singular adventures and misfortunes of Osrick, Dreadnought, and Clara, occupied the respective parties to a late hour, and much was there yet to relate, when prudence compelled them to yield to the necessity of separating for the night.

Early the next morning Osrick found an opportunity of being alone with his father,

father, and the letter he had received from him, when on board the transport, was almost the first circumstance that he alluded to.

"If it be a crime, and certainly it is," said his father, "to harbour

UNJUST SUSPICIONS

of the conduct of any one, of such a crime I have been atrociously guilty; but Heaven, I trust, has pardoned me, and sincerely do I hope that I shall never be so unfortunate as to fall into a similar error. Mrs. Somerton's conduct has been irreproachable, and I must have been more than blind not to have perceived it. She is a generous, just, and faithful wife to me, and my love for her is united with the most heartfelt esteem. God bless her! Believe me, Osrick, she is deserving of every attention that both you and I can pay to her, to support and make her happy."

Mr.

Mr. Somerton now related to Osrick how his first suspicions of Mrs. Somerton had been excited in the ball-room, and his subsequent uneasiness when he had missed the keys of the shrubbery, and when he discovered Mrs. Somerton so unexpectedly with Belmont on the grounds. The impassioned influence of the moment, he said, had induced him to pen the letter that he (Osrick) had received, and the instant after he had written that, to send a formal challenge to Belmont.

The latter, however, he said, he had scarcely dispatched, when he received an explanatory epistle from Mrs. Somerton. His unbridled rage would not permit her to state why Belmont had visited her while in the shrubbery; nor until that time could she account for the jealous fears which he had betrayed respecting her conduct on a former occasion.

Belmont, it appeared, cut to the soul by what had occurred, when Alethea was rescued

rescued from his lawless power, had no sooner escaped from Osrick and Dreadnought, than he made the best of his way for Somerton Lodge, and on his arriving there, finding that Mrs. Somerton was in the shrubbery, he repaired thither to her, and, with tears in his eyes, apprized her of what had happened. He begged, he entreated, in the most feeling manner, that she would be his advocate with Alethea. His passion for her, he said, he then found was such that he could not exist without her; and to make her his, by receiving her hand at the altar, was the only compensation his heart prompted him to offer, for the imprudence of which he had been guilty. Mrs. Somerton, after expatiating on the infamy of his conduct, in terms such as the occasion merited, moved by his distress, promised to comply with his request, and this promise it was that had induced him to raise her hand to his lips, the more forcibly to evince the gratitude

he

he felt. The letter, Mr. Somerton observed, was couched in such strong and convincing language, that a reconcilement with his wife was the immediate result of his having perused it; and the folly of his own conduct, though it might admit of palliation, he felt had been too gross to be defended. However, his wife had forgiven it, and nothing from that time had been said on the subject.

Early the next morning he received an answer to his challenge from Mr. Belmont. It was such a one as his wife's letter had prepared him to expect. An interview with Belmont was the consequence. Belmont was as urgent with Mr. Somerton as he previously had been with his wife, if possible, to prevail on him to induce Alethea to forgive the insult she had received, and accept the compensation he offered. To convince Mr. Somerton of his sincerity, and that he was fully sensible of his former errors, he freely made known what had been his villainous

villainous designs towards her, telling him that he it indeed was in the shrubbery when the keys were missing. The keys, he said, he had taken, to obtain an impression of them on wax, that others might be made to open the locks to which they respectively belonged, as he had possessed the desperate resolution of forcing Alethea away from the Lodge, and which the frequent walks she indulged in alone in the shrubbery, promised to give him an opportunity of doing. That he might not be mistaken, in respect to which key belonged to the outer lock and which to the inner, he had taken occasion to try both, and from which trial he was returning to the house through the grounds, when he was observed by Alethea; and the recollection that he might be observed by the company in the drawing-room, had at that time induced him to turn back, and to enter the Lodge by the other road. The keys he replaced from whence he had taken them, not knowing

at

at that time that they had been missed, though he was soon after apprized of it; yet, all circumstances considered, he had escaped, he said, to his satisfaction, as he believed that he had removed all suspicion that at first he imagined was entertained of him. The result of this interview was, that Mr. Somerton promised to urge his suit, as soon as Alethea returned, which he had done, but had found her so painfully averse to listen to him, that he soon after gave it up, and apprized Belmont of the unsuccess of his mission, who was thereby driven to despair. Belmont subsequently sent several penitential letters to Mr. and Mrs. Stokes, and Alethea, but the latter had been invariably returned unopened, and those to the former produced not the effect he desired, for so incensed had they justly been at his conduct, that from that time to the present they had never permitted him to enter their house.

In the disappointment he had suffered,

and

and the anxiety of mind he endured, Belmont lost his health, and when Alethea was removed to Bath, he removed thither also, and was, at the present time, so ill there, that but slender hopes were entertained for his life.

"It was not, my dear boy," concluded Mr. Somerton, "until after we thought your death was confirmed to us, that we became acquainted with the attachment that existed between you and Alethea; when she regarded you as lost to her for ever, in the agonies she then suffered, she revealed to us what had passed between you when you had rescued her from Belmont. In her declining health, she hails approaching dissolution with rapture—a rapture that is caused by the prospect which she says it will open to her, of being united to you in "another and a better world."

The reader may guess what effect his father's words had on Osrick. The state of his affections towards the lovely girl, he

he unequivocally made known to him; and the old gentleman soon after left him, to prepare Alethea to welcome his joyous and unexpected return.

In the course of this day Alethea was told that her lover was in England; and ere the evening had far advanced, she had the

of being informed that Osrick literally was in the house, and who, the instant after, presented himself.

Though prepared with so much prudent caution for the meeting, yet the joy that thrilled through her heart at beholding him, was too powerful for her to bear; and as she pronounced the name of Osrick, and saw him rushing towards her, she dropped lifeless into his arms.

The distress of Osrick at this juncture was terrible; but the rapturous emotions which succeeded, as she recovered, may be

better

better conceived than expressed; we must, therefore, draw a veil over those feelings which were too exquisite to be described.

THE CONCLUSION

was propitious to the lovers. Alethea regained her health, with a rapidity that even astonished her friends; and three months subsequent to Osrick's return, she gave him her hand at the altar.

Dreadnought, who had successfully struggled with the passion that Alethea had so suddenly inspired in him, found his attachment daily increase for Clara, and who, in the end, joyfully bestowed her hand on the honest and deserving soldier.

Belmont, as predicted, died at Bath. The loss of Alethea was a mortification that hourly preyed upon his health, unti it snapped the strings of life. He had offended—grossly offended the virtuous

woman he adored; and his punishment, though severe, could but be regarded as just.

A few months after his marriage, Osrick received a letter from his esteemed friends at Buenos Ayres. The amiable Amelia, he was gratified to find, had, in some measure, got the better of her attachment to him, and willingly received the addresses of a young man of good family, with the consent of her parents, and preparations were actually making for their nuptials.

Judith, who had lost her place through the visit that had formerly been paid to Grassingly, Osrick provided for; nor did he forget old Medgwin and his son. The former, as advised, called on him at the Lodge, when Osrick put one question to him, that he had neglected to do before, and which was to know why a skull should be kept in the apartment where he had discovered one in the cottage of Madge?

Medgwin

Medgwin smiled at the interrogation. It was not the first time, he said, that Osrick had seen it. In truth, it was the very head he had procured to *ornament* the figure he had occasionally exhibited in the neighbourhood of Whitehawk.

The correctness of every thing that had been related by Medgwin and his son, Osrick's inquiries established to his satisfaction. The attempt that had been made on his life, when returning from Chichester to Portsmouth, was also ultimately explained to him. A miscreant, who had formerly been in the pay of Grassingly, and who was executed at Newgate for a murder and robbery, confessed that he had been induced to make that effort to destroy him, to have an extra claim on the purse of his old master; and that after he had made the ineffectual attempt, he had concealed himself in an excavation, which had partly been formed by himself, on one side of the

road, which was concealed by a thick hedge, and which Osrick in vain had searched for. The hole he had contrived was for the purpose of giving him an opportunity of surprising and plundering the unwary, and in which, in but too many instances, he had been successful.

Annette is still the attendant of Alethea; and though the recollected misfortunes of her family will sometimes raise the traits of sadness in her features, she is grateful for the friends with which Providence has blessed her, and is every way worthy of their esteem.

The harmony of the circle is, at this time, uninterrupted at Somerton Lodge. Dreadnought and Osrick both continue in the army, the former having purchased a majority, and the latter a Captain's commission, in the same regiment, and both enjoy more real happiness than usually falls to the lot of mortals.

The singular events of his life Osrick often

often thought of with astonishment. The operations of justice, to expose the guilty and uphold the innocent, were strongly marked in the fate of Grassingly. He had deserted his country, to conceal his crimes, but the wrath of Heaven had pursued him, and, in the agony of his latter moments, compelled him to confess his iniquities, that the injured might obtain redress.

"The ways of Heav'n are dark and intricate,
Puzzled in mazes and perplex'd with error;"

but which, even in this sublunary probation, will seldom permit vice, however privately commited, to escape the infamy, the punishment it deserves.

Alethea and Clara are almost inseparable; and three months of the year, at least, they pass with Mr. and Mrs. Somerton, at Somerton Lodge. The attachments of their husbands increase with their

their days, and the smiles of mutual confidence, genuine worth, and heavenly contentment, irradiate their mansions.

"When wedded love is founded on esteem,
Which the fair merits of the mind engage,
That shews the charms which never can decay;
And time, which gives new whiteness to the swan,
Improves their lustre!"

"If you would have the nuptial union last,
Let virtue be the bond that ties it fast."

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